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# **University of Sussex**

## **The Eastern Question and the Fallacy of Modernity** On the Premodern Origins of the Modern Inter-State Order in Southeastern Europe

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Department of International Relations  
Submitted for the degree of DPhil  
January 2010

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted, either in the same or different form,  
to this or any other University for a degree.

Signature: .....

## Summary

Clemens Hoffmann  
Submitted for the degree of DPhil

### **The Eastern Question and the Fallacy of Modernity**

On the Premodern Origins of the Modern Inter-State Order in Southeastern Europe

The ‘eastern question’ of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is conventionally understood as the power-vacuum created by the decay of the geostrategically important Ottoman Empire in the context of a highly competitive and expansionary European inter-state system. Conventional approaches to International Relations argue that the eastern question was solved by creating multiple, legitimate, sovereign *national* states *in lieu* of Ottoman rule as the outcome of an expanding European modernity, replacing the outdated, illegitimate and despotic rule of Oriental princes. However, this assumption entails a tension between the supposedly universal scope of European modernity and its fractured, multi-national form of transmission.

This contradiction, implicit in International Relations theory, is the subject of this thesis. Examining this problem in the light of the eastern question, this thesis offers a historical sociological reconstruction of the social transformations that produced the supposedly ‘modern’ geopolitical ‘order’ in Southeastern Europe. The critical re-reading and positive reconstruction of the Ottoman trajectory from the end of territorial expansion in 1683 to the Greek secession in 1821, problematizes in how far territorial fragmentation of political rule can be understood as the ‘logical’ result of the expansion of ‘modern’ social and political relations.

It is argued that, instead of understanding these developments as a teleological and predetermined process of Westernization, the key for understanding the emergence of the post-Ottoman state system lies in deciphering the dialectic between a ‘domestic’ social struggle among pre-capitalist classes and an intensifying pan-European geopolitical dynamic. Hence, rather than understanding the process of nation-formation as the inevitable result of the expansion of ‘modern’ international relations, it is necessary to emphasize the specificity of the Ottoman, like any other transformation. This in turn helps illuminating the unnatural and malleable nature of ‘modern’ territorial inter-national ‘orders’. Rather than implementing a just, natural or finite domestic and geopolitical order, ‘national’ fragmentations result from specific, materially conditioned social struggles.

This raises generic problems with static and ahistorical understandings of social and geopolitical relations. It is suggested that a theoretically open historical materialist sociology of International Relations can provide a remedy. In consequence, it is argued that the ‘eastern question’, far from being solved by the formation of national states, still remains open to this day.

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## 1 A World after whose Image?

### Modernizing International Relations and Ottoman Decline

*'By the beginning of the twentieth century Europe had added to its repertoire of Schimpfwörter, or disparagements, a new one which turned out to be more persistent than others with centuries old traditions. "Balkanization" not only had come to denote the parcelization of large and viable political units but also had become a synonym for a reversion to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian.'*

*Todorova (1997)*

#### 1.1 Introduction

On February 17, 2008 Kosovo declared its independence from the Republic of Serbia. Many Western states recognized the new state soon thereafter. Arguably, these developments, while upholding a Kosovan 'right to self-determination', challenged established principles of international order - most notably the principle of sovereignty understood as the right to non-intervention in Serbian internal affairs. Beyond evoking the old dilemma of international relations between 'justice' and 'order', some serious international implications were to follow. Russia defended its own intervention in Southern Ossetia in August 2008 with reference to the Kosovan precedent which had, according to the Russian rationale, established a 'right to secession' in conjunction with a protective Great Power enforcing it through military intervention. Conservative international lawyers had pointed at the dangers of legalizing secessions since the 1999 NATO intervention in the Kosovan case, as they constituted an open attack on one of the core principles of international order: state sovereignty and the inviolability of internationally recognized territorial borders. This was also reflected in the refusal of states within the West, like Spain, to acknowledge Kosovan independence. The Basque nationalist movement should not be encouraged by this precedent. Kosovo, however, by no means set any precedent, at least not in regards to the phenomenon of '*national*' secession as such, which is just as old as the very principle of its antithesis, i.e. '*national*' state sovereignty. More generally, this conflict between two mutually negating as well as reaffirming 'national' principles of self-determination and state sovereignty continues to constitute a foundational paradox of 'modern' international relations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis the terms modern and premodern will be used in a thin heuristic sense, as pertaining to chronology and in a thicker, more substantive sense as a problematization of the

The clash of these two *universal* principles of modern IR has frequently led to a *differentiation* of outcomes. They could be described as plurality at best, mostly disorder and socio-political instability, culminating in genocidal war at worst. The fact that many of these struggles were, like the above, fought on the Balkan Peninsula led to the articulation and widespread reception of the term '*Balkanization*' in the Social Science literature and political lexicon, associated with these problematic social phenomena (Der Derian 1991; Todorova 1994; Todorova 1997; Bjelic and Savic 2002). Paradoxically this process of multiple state formations which has entered our conceptual vocabulary as a metaphor for instability and the unmaking of geopolitical order represents simultaneously the very realization of a modern *international* order. For it is precisely the emergence of a variety of sovereign states through a series of national secessions in southeastern Europe that, according to widely held assumptions, is understood to signify the transformation from an Oriental-Ottoman 'backward' and oppressive regime of exploitation and domination to modern, secular and enlightened forms of sovereignty. Abou-El-Haj expresses this assumption by noting that "in order to become truly modern, it [the Ottoman Empire] was perceived to having to transform necessarily into a nation-state, or rather a variety of nation-states" (Abou-El-Haj 2005: 62).

International Relations theory, meanwhile, has departed a long way from the positivist realist assumptions on the transhistorically fixed ontological distinction of social relations *within* political communities from those *without that constituted, ultimately, a reified notion of 'the international', predicated on a sharp inside/outside distinction* (Waltz 1959, 1979, 2001). Critical theory, especially constructivist (Ruggie 1993), poststructuralist (Walker 1993) as well as historical materialist (Rosenberg 1994) critiques of Realism, have convincingly argued that what Realism assumes as timeless givens, in fact constitutes a historically peculiar, specifically modern form of sovereignty and international order. Having established this common concern with Realism, what is usually less problematized in these critical approaches is the understanding of "*territorial* sovereignty and *national* sovereignty as the distinctively *modern* way of ordering the 'international'" (Hall 1999: 3). The use of 'nation' appears to be synonymous with 'modern', indicating the underlying Wilsonian principle of ethno-linguistic self-determination as the organising principle of the Westphalian international order "which holds that the political and the national

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notion of modernity as a holistic concept. The findings of this thesis will destabilize the latter by replacing the modern/premodern dichotomy with the idea of historical specificity.

unit should be congruent”(Gellner 1983: 1). Thus, IR Theory has long focussed on the historically specific nature of the institutions of modern *territorial* sovereignty, whilst at the same time underspecifying and downplaying the problem of its *national* character, relying passively on theories of nationalism to understand this social phenomenon (Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Balakrishnan 1994). Those theories, inversely, have usually been developed outside the main discourses of International Relations. While some have dealt with the effects of nationalism on International Relations (Mayall 1990; Hall 1999), most have neglected questions of international relations as a constitutive element in their own theorizations of the emergence of nationalism.<sup>2</sup>

This somewhat problematic division of labour between IR Theory and theories of nationalism tends to leave national difference as an explanans ‘by default’ for multi-stateness, rather as being explored as part of the explanandum. In this sense, the post-Ottoman territorial pluriverse in southeastern Europe is often (mis)understood as the natural outcome of a process of ‘international socialisation’ (Halliday 1992: 460) whereby the international system forced, either through military means, socialisation through norms, or market and middle class pressure, the Ottoman Empire to disintegrate along the lines of their purportedly constituent and virtually pre-existing ‘national’ parts. This process of disintegration and subsequent re-organisation according to the natural precepts of nation-formation is held to be synonymous with the establishment of modern sovereignty

This thesis challenges this conventional wisdom. To rectify this perspective, this thesis argues that the key aspects conventionally attributed to the ideal-type of the modern state as the constitutive building-block of modern international order – a coherent and homogeneous national identity, exclusive territoriality, a secular and rational state-apparatus and absolute sovereignty, and capitalist social property relations – cannot be conceptualised as co-constitutive, co-eval and congruent aspects of the same modernising and universalising process, but need to be disaggregated and then re-assembled through a long-term and large-scale historical inquiry into their complex, protracted, imperfect and chronologically sequenced and cumulative co-development to account for the specificity of the process of Ottoman decline and the subsequent construction of post-Ottoman regional order. This perspective places crucial emphasis on the contested and agent-centred construction of this complex phenomenon – demonstrating a historical specificity that cannot be inferred from

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<sup>2</sup> See Dufour 2006 for an exception

overarching grand narratives – be they Realist, Liberal or orthodox Marxist. More specifically, the modern nature of Ottoman rule and the Ottoman reform efforts from 1789 onwards have been underrated in the literature in the same way that the modern character of the late Ottoman nationalist secessions has been overrated. In addition to the literature in IR Theory and on nationalism, conventional historical-sociological approaches have also failed to adequately theorize this process of imperial disintegration and nation-state formation in the Balkans adequately. In particular, it will be argued that the specific territorial shape of the post-Ottoman inter-*national* order was neither the result of the logic of geopolitical competition that ‘selects out a militarily/geopolitically inefficient state’ (Tilly 1985, 1990; Mann 1994; Spruyt 1996), nor the direct result of an expansion of the capitalist world economy and shifting relations of exchange into the region (Wallerstein 1974; Keyder 1976a; Wallerstein, I. 1979; Kasaba 1988), but the regionally specific outcome of social struggles situated between pre-capitalist provincial power holders who successfully mobilized nationalist projects with highly specific social origins to defend their particular and backward looking interests against a modernizing/centralizing Ottoman centre. It is the sharpening of this conflict in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that lead to the disintegration and break-up of the Ottoman Empire along specific and socio-historically configured territorial lines. In other words, this thesis argues that the inter-national order in southeastern Europe cannot be seen as a linear and functional outcome of a teleological ‘modernization’ process, but locates the shape of the post-Ottoman regional inter-state order in the contested conjunction of wider geopolitical pressures in combination with specific intra-imperial socio-political conflicts between the imperial center and provincial elites that shaped diverse regional secession-projects and the construction of local nationalisms, rooted in pre-modern contexts. This, finally, allows for the utilization of the Ottoman example to reveal the continuously volatile nature of territorially defined relations of domination, and to problematize the constantly transforming nature of IR’s constitutive ontologies - the national and ‘the international’. This is presented as a generic problem for a static understanding of contemporary international relations that can only be overcome by a historical approach.

## 1.2 The 'Eastern Question' and the Specificity of the Ottoman Case

The 'Eastern Question' remains a historiographically, conceptually and politically contested and highly controversial issue (Macfie 1996: 1-4). This question, in its common-sense understanding, revolves around the power-vacuum left by the decay of the geo-strategically sensitive Ottoman dominions in the context of a highly competitive inter-dynastic system of European states in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It concerned the future of the weakening Ottoman Empire as much as the management of inter-dynastic European relations and the balance of power, the maintenance of which was contingent on the distribution of the potential Ottoman spoils (Anderson 1966). However, what is normally presented as the 'Eastern Question' in the singular, contains, on closer inspection, a set of further sub-questions, reaching from the Russo-Austrian rivalry in the Balkans over access to the Straits, via the control of Suez, to the guardianship of the Holy Sites (Clayton 1974). Regardless of the proliferation of 'Eastern Questions' in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the major issue at stake, i.e. post-Ottoman international order, is frequently understood to have found a logical or natural answer with the emergence of a regional inter-nation system, realizing each nation's right to self-determination, in place of the dysfunctional, backward Oriental Ottoman polity.

Contrary to this assumption, it is suggested here that the Eastern Question has not been solved by the creation of multiple national states in the region, as it continues to be a pressing, ongoing and open question of international order in that particular region of the world, not least, since the post-Ottoman political geography still carries strong connotations of its historical inheritance as a 'Powder Keg', rather than any settled and stable inter-state architecture.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the formation of the 'Powder Keg' is not only central to understanding the outbreak of the Great War, but continues to discomfort policy makers around the world.<sup>4</sup> As was the case in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the persistence of the 'Eastern Question' entails even further sub-questions, including the Macedonian question, the Cyprus question, the Kurdish question and the Armenian question to name but a few. The 'Eastern Question' is therefore

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<sup>3</sup> See map no. 1 in the appendix for an overview of the post-Ottoman geopolitical order regarding the 'Powder Keg'

<sup>4</sup> In a hearing on April 4, 2009 the US Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe urged the US government to renew their efforts in the Western Balkans due to a recognizable increase in political instability: US Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (2009): The Western Balkans: Challenges for U.S. and European Engagement. Available online: [http://www.csce.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=ContentRecords.ViewTranscript&ContentRecord\\_id=448&ContentType=H,B&ContentRecordType=H&CFID=18849146&CFTOKEN=53](http://www.csce.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=ContentRecords.ViewTranscript&ContentRecord_id=448&ContentType=H,B&ContentRecordType=H&CFID=18849146&CFTOKEN=53) (date of access: 10/04/2009)

regarded in this thesis not only in ‘antiquarian’ historiographic terms – as History for History’s sake - but as a symbolic shorthand for a persisting and unresolved geopolitical problem, which still carries important theoretical puzzles and implications for International Relations. In consequence, the ‘Eastern Question’ is an expression of the inherent tension between the universal and homogenizing aspirations of the European ‘international society’ understood in Fred Halliday’s terms as “inter-societal and inter-state homology, in domestic values and organisation” and the particularistic and heterogeneous outcomes of social transformation in the post-Ottoman world in the form of instable national states (Halliday 1992: 435). Thus, rather than Ottoman disintegration representing the logical end-point of a teleological process of ‘modernization’ that settles the ‘Eastern Question’, national fragmentation is merely a reformulation, if not aggravation of the problem in territorial/national terms. The ‘Question’ has found a series of historically connected temporary answers, but has re-imposed itself simultaneously in ever renewed forms.

Furthermore, the ‘Eastern Question’ represents more than an idiosyncratic socio-political and diplomatic conundrum, but remains inserted into the real-life battlefield of the notorious East/West divide. In other words, the ‘Serb Revolt’ and the ‘Greek Question’, emerging at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are also conceptualised as expressions of a deeper, underlying and almost trans-historical struggle between ‘European Civilization’ and ‘Asiatic Despotism’. This thesis takes issue with this ‘Euro-centric trap’ and its associated Orientalist reading of ‘Eastern’ backwardness by investigating modes of Western expansion beyond the formal Imperial experience. The Ottoman Empire and its demise in southeastern Europe offers itself as a central object of inquiry as it constitutes the first historical example of late-coming state-formation in a pro-Western fashion outside of Europe’s continental core, that was not preconditioned by formal colonial expansion. Thus, it can be said that the external universalisation of a maturing European inter-state system unfolds here for the first time, as it is here that the paradoxical nature of this universal, if fractured, expansion and its particularistic outcomes surfaces. However, since the history of Ottoman decline is conventionally understood as a process of natural evolution, converging towards the European normality of international relations, this historical trajectory is largely undervalued as a crucial resource for understanding the social and geopolitical development of the post-Ottoman regions,

notably the Balkans and the Middle East.<sup>5</sup> Throughout this process some forty states were created (so far), comprising the current post-Ottoman order. As these highly differentiated states and societies have a high degree of social and geopolitical instability in common, it seems justified to argue that the post-Ottoman order, far from having established a quasi-realist inter-state system where anarchy constitutes a balance of power system and a state of (geo)political normalcy and solidity, has notoriously fuelled conflicts, provoked international crises, led to economic underdevelopment and continues to do so.

However, the constitution of the ‘Powder Keg’, the ‘Eastern Question’ and the ‘Balkanization of Ottoman Rule’, has also fuelled debates within IR Theory. Especially the end of the Cold War, which had temporarily imposed bi-polar order, and the break-up of Yugoslavia have challenged conventional assumptions in the field of International Relations. These debates will be elaborated on in the following pages with a view to the explanatory potential of the theoretical innovations generated by the so-called ‘historical’ (and sociological) ‘turn’ in International Relations. This section will commence with a brief elaboration of the Neo-realist mainstream that was the main target of various new theoretical angles developed after the aforementioned events in the 1990s. This comprised most notably the project of ‘social constructivism’ and its emphasis on the social and historical construction of the international structures, described by Realism as ahistorical and perennial ‘givens’. A similar critique has been advanced from within the field of Historical Sociology which has made major inroads into the field of IR. Within the Historical Sociology of international relations, three major strands will be discussed. Initially, the most prominent approach, Neo-Weberian Historical Sociology (NWHS) and its emphasis on geopolitical competition as the engine of social transformation will be examined. Secondly, the literature review turns to World Systems Theory with its emphasis on expanding relations of unequal exchange. Thirdly, a more classical Marxist approach that shifts the focus from circulation back to production, class struggle and social property relations will be explored. Lastly, the latest innovation that has emerged from within this camp of ‘Political Marxism’, the adaptation of Trotsky’s theory of uneven and combined development as a theory of International Relations will be investigated. All approaches will be tested for their potential to illuminate the social transformations that led to the emergence of the post-Ottoman

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<sup>5</sup> This thesis will focus on the transformations in southeastern Europe. This is partly due to limitations of space but also due to the by and large non-colonial nature of the transformation there.

inter-national system before it is argued that Political Marxism provides the most adequate conceptual perspective for reconstructing and confronting the empirical and theoretical problems posed by the 'Eastern Question'.

### **1.3 Neo-Realism and the Historical Turn in International Relations**

Realism and its scientific successor have long constituted the mainstream in US-American thinking about International Relations. Kenneth N. Waltz's initial 1959 exposition of his theory in *Man, the State and War* (Waltz 1959), differentiates between three institutionally separate spheres of social determination, human behaviour, hierarchical domestic politics and anarchic international relations. More influential (and more criticised) was his elaboration of the relationship between the latter two spheres in his *Theory of International Politics* (Waltz 1979), which was strongly influenced by micro-economic theory. According to this discipline-defining treatise, the international system is constituted by three different components. Firstly, the ordering principle of international politics is anarchy. As all states are 'functionally equal' and as there is a multiplicity of states, all relations between them are conducted within the ungoverned realm of the international. As a shift from international anarchy to hierarchy in the form of a world government is unlikely, and as all other features of international politics are derived from this 'ordering principle', Waltz argues for the transhistorical applicability of his theory. While being functionally equal rational security maximizers under the *structural* imperative to seek survival under the conditions of anarchy, states, or 'units' are only differentiated by their relative share of military capabilities. Change is, therefore exclusively understood as change in terms of the distribution of capabilities across the units within an unalterable systemic *structure*, which also led to the labelling of Neo-realism as 'structural' Realism (Waltz 1979: Ch. 5). The ordering principle – "decentralized and anarchic" (Waltz 1979: 88) – is not to be confused with an anomic state, however,<sup>6</sup> but as a means of international regulation. Waltz introduces the notion of balance of power as a self-regulating mechanism of the international system which imposes itself as a rational 'logic' independent of any individual state's intentions and, therefore, structurally coerces them into applying rational power-politics. It is left open, however, whether this regulation necessarily produces peace.

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<sup>6</sup> Anomic means 'norm-free', without any kind of order; in this special sense, we can also talk about the hypothetical, pre-historic Hobbesian state of nature.



Even though Waltz is not explicit about the systemic functions of war, it appears as a given that balancing and counterbalancing military capabilities generates a form of stability, even though the act of establishing order is, as in the Ottoman case, always disorderly. “The natural state is the state of war. Under the conditions of international politics, war recurs; the sure way to abolish war, then, is to abolish international politics” (Waltz 2000: 8). A neorealist understanding of geopolitics therefore implies a competitive juxtaposition of self-enclosed entities whose individual security dilemmas continuously reproduce potential or actual violent conflicts. It is on these grounds, i.e. the all-determining anarchical structure of international relations, the balance of power and the recurrence of war and conflict as automatic ordering mechanisms, that Waltz prioritizes the continuity and predictability of international politics over social change and transformation.

However, it is precisely this inability to deal with change that became a contentious issue. The end of bipolarity and the accompanying resurgence in ethnic violence shed doubt on Neo-Realism’s ahistorical, positivist and structuralist understanding of world politics. With its empirical textbook illustration collapsing, Realism was faced with the major ‘embarrassment’ of not being able to explain change (Ashley 1984; Kratochwil 1993). The demise of the certainties of bipolarity, thus triggered a wave of criticism of Realism and similarly structuralist and path dependent approaches in IR. In response, realists usually point to the prevalence of anarchy in international relations as an irrefutable transhistorical systemic characteristic of world politics. This, they argue, means that change in realist terms remains a non-problem: as long as political rule is fractured into separate ‘units’, anarchy and all associated assumptions prevail.

Another empirically inspired source of contention with Realism was the increased attention to culture, identity and the constitutive ideology of modernity of nationalism.<sup>7</sup> This criticism was motivated by the emergence of ethno-nationalism and new national movements after the end of the Cold War, exemplified by the break-up of Yugoslavia. However, like change and transformation, problems of culture and identity have not only become relevant to IR due to recent events, but constitute important *a priori* building blocks for explaining the diversified nature of the modern international system.

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<sup>7</sup> See chapter 2

Again, the lack of problematizing these and other supposedly missing elements like culture, identity politics or ethnic violence is not thought to constitute a problem for Realism since, as Waltz argues, “[t]heory has to be about something. It can’t be about everything” (Halliday and Rosenberg 1998: 379). However, while the dialogue with realists themselves can be characterized as somewhat fruitless on these grounds, the debate in general led to some productive theoretical innovations, as a rich variety of critical approaches in International Relations developed out of this critical engagement with Realism. The main subject of these approaches was consequently to probe the sources of change and transformation. This caused a ‘historical’ as well as a ‘sociological’ turn in IR. These new ‘turns’ could, therefore, equally contribute to explaining the disjuncture between the universal and cosmopolitan outlook of European capitalist modernity and the multiple and territorially fractured inter-state system that seems to contradict it. This, conversely, could help understanding various aspects of the process of Ottoman disintegration. In the following section, a brief discussion of five important theoretical developments that have tried to implement these ‘turns’ in IR Theory will be discussed with regard to their potential for explaining the 19<sup>th</sup> century transformations in southeastern Europe.

#### **1.4 Constructivism in IR: On the Inter-Subjective Construction of Social Reality**

Among these critical approaches, it was Constructivism that left the biggest mark on the discipline. The constructivist research agenda has developed into one of the most productive and influential research programmes in International Relations outside of the North American mainstream. Defining Constructivism in a succinct manner is not easy, however, given the proliferation of theoretical approaches that are broadly associated with this paradigm. Generally, it claims to seize the ‘middle ground’ between the liberal and realist contestants in the inter-paradigm debate in IR Theory (Adler 1997). Despite the prominence of the constructivist research agenda in International Relations, it does not follow a coherent set of theoretical assumptions that could be summarized in a succinct way. Ronan Palan (Palan 2000: 576) for example proposes a differentiation of constructivist thought in IR into hard and a soft variants. ‘Soft’ constructivists are understood here as IR scholars who try to overcome essentialized ontologies by studying social context, identities, culture and socially constituted norms as a form of international order (Wendt 1987, 1992; Hall

1999; Reus-Smit 1999). Hard constructivists, on the other hand, do not consider a material reality outside of its social, inter-subjective constitution and have, therefore, concentrated, amongst other things, on language theory (Kratochwil 1989; Onuf 1989, 1998).

Precisely because these approaches are rather diverse, a general summary of the theory, or set of theories, necessarily involves a great amount of simplification. Expressed in the most generic of terms, social Constructivism is concerned with the social, inter-subjective construction of meaning and social reality. In terms of International Relations, Alexander Wendt has pioneered this approach with his work on the agent-structure problem and his famous revelation that 'anarchy is what states make of it' (Wendt 1987, 1992). According to Wendt, the meaning of anarchy is not perennially fixed, but depends on the actors', i.e. the states' inter-subjective construction of norms and rules, which, thereby, create an international structure that provides some level of predictability of agent behaviour based on shared norms. This structure is, however, constantly, if slowly, changing depending on normative, philosophical and social transformations (Reus-Smit 1999). Thus, order and anarchy become historically specific concepts that do not operate according to realist 'laws of nature,' but according to socially constructed and consequently malleable rules. Hence, the defining condition of IR in Realism is in 'reality' not timeless and immutable, but a social construct, the meaning of which states have socially and inter-subjectively not only shaped but created. The meaning of anarchy, therefore, can change, even if it is a persistent, but not unchangeable quality of IR defined by the absence of a central authority. In short, 'anarchy is what states make of it'. Equally, states derive their specific identities from the same inter-subjective creation of meaning. Constructivism does not refute Realism's emphasis on the importance of structure, but explains its social origins while also setting out the conditions for changing it. In consequence, Constructivism does not deny the existence of a material world. It is rather the case that the physical world only acquires meaning through its socialization via inter-action. The relevance, say, of a nuclear warhead to social science and IR is not determined by its material composition, or even by its destructive capability, but by the inter-subjective meaning attributed to it within the anarchical Cold War structure of the international system. The ontology of structure and agents is therefore "largely derived from their function in theory rather than everyday life" (Kratochwil 1996: 218).

Constructivism's major achievement consists in its ability to provide a theory of change and transformation that nevertheless accounts for the structural and geopolitical determination of social outcomes. However, unlike Realism (and Historical Materialism), Constructivism does not entail any foundational assumptions about the motivation of human action or the nature of social interaction. Despite the diversity within the constructivist school, the various authors start from an emphasis on the ideational and socially constructed character of the material world, including international relations. Thus, the pluralism within constructivist thinking in IR, which is often described as theoretical incoherence, on the other hand constitutes a major advantage. This means that apart from the capacity to conceptualize change and processes of transformation, Constructivism can be and is frequently applied to a variety of different social phenomena. These adaptations range from asserting the centrality of norms and rules in international relations (Kratochwil 1989; Reus-Smit 1999), to the problem of collective identity formation and culture in International Relations (Lapid, Y. and Kratochwil, F. V. 1996; Hall 1999) through to historicising the origins of the modern inter-state system (Kratochwil 1986; Ruggie 1993) and understanding the trans-national activities of multi-national corporations (MNCs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social networks (Risse-Kappen 1995).

Thus, constructivism's appeal is not only derived from a capacity to overcome the state-centric and static Neorealist paradigm, but also due to its theoretical versatility. This is why constructivism's impact on the discipline of International Relations is considerable despite, or maybe precisely because of its theoretical pluralism. Even though it would be unfair to argue that Constructivism is theoretically incoherent simply because its theoretical premises allow various adaptations, these variations, nevertheless make it appear somewhat 'confused' (Palan 2000). Constructivism is, therefore, better understood as "less a theory with well-developed hypotheses than (...) a bundle of social theoretic commitments and concerns" (Barnett 2002: 101).

#### *Explaining Diversity? The Social Construction of Culture, Identity and Nationalism*

It is within the constructivist project in International Relations that the re-introduction of the 'national' as a means of understanding societal diversity was most forcefully advanced, since as Lapid and Kratochwil argue, "as a discipline or field [IR], should generate its object of study through a careful and comprehensive monitoring of the

‘national’” (Lapid, Y. and Kratochwil, F. 1996: 105). The debate about identity, culture and the origins of nationalism seem to be well suited to the constructivist research program which appears theoretically well equipped to illuminate the nation states’ “socially constructed (as opposed to primordially given) nature; their optional (as opposed to deterministic) dimensions; their fragmenting/diversifying (as opposed to integrating/homogenizing) implications; and their multidimensional dynamic (as opposed to unidimensional/static) features” (Lapid 1996: 7).

National differentiation is a non-problem for Realism, which treats it as an *a priori* ontological given. Explaining the origins of difference should constitute a central problem for any theory of the international, however, especially when it is built upon assumptions about the inherently conflictual nature of these differentiated interests. Constructivists understand difference, therefore, not as an endogenous cultural quality of states but as collective identities that are an ideational product resulting from states’ self-definition vis-à-vis other states as well as within the wider international structure. As Wendt put it: “In any given situation, however, it is the nature of identification that determines how the boundaries of the self are drawn (Wendt 1996: 52).” This interest is, however, not only derived from recent historical events, but is central to the constructivist understanding of IR. Individual state’s identities are socially constructed and their meanings are established inter-subjectively. However, the state agents equally give meaning to the empty realist notion of anarchy and the various modes of interaction in the absence of a central authority.

#### *Rodney Bruce-Hall’s National Collective Identities*

Despite the centrality of interest in the constructivist research program, relatively little work has been done on the problem of nationalism as the contemporary specifically modern form of collective identity. Rodney Bruce Hall’s work on ‘National Collective Identities’ (Hall 1999) presents a notable exception from this rule and deserves, therefore, some dedicated attention here.

Like most constructivists, Hall starts from a critique of realist state-centrism. At the core of this criticism lays the distinction between territorial-sovereign actors and national-sovereign actors, as well as between the nation and the state as concepts. According to Hall, this disjuncture is underrepresented in IR Theory, which hardly ever draws from the literature on the phenomenon of nationalism, despite some rather obvious potential for an inter-disciplinary cross-fertilization as mentioned above.

Such an engagement would reveal that it was only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that ‘national’ forms of collective identities became the dominant principle underlying sovereignty and thereby providing legitimacy to state agents. For Hall this widely unrecognized shift from dynastic and purely territorial forms of sovereignty to national sovereignty represents a change in the operating logic of the international system and the nature of IR altogether (Hall 1999). Once states’ identities are derived from ‘below’, i.e. from the more or less democratic expression of a popular will, the potential of national sub-state groups to reformulate the state and the state’s interest and behaviour means that the potential for change and transformation in the international system as a whole grows (Hall 1999: 5). Change, therefore, does not initially occur at the systemic level, but results from social transformations at the sub-state level, i.e. from non-state groups, aiming at recognition as unified collectives. It is this emergence of ‘national’ as opposed to ‘territorial’ sovereignty which alters the nature of IR from the realist Westphalian to the first “post-Westphalian” system. In this novel system, a ‘will to manifest-identity’ replaces the Nietzschean ‘will-to-power’ (Hall 1999: 6) inherent in classical Realism. Loyal to his constructivist research agenda, Hall also points out how it is not only a change in the actor’s constitution as national sovereigns that brings about systemic change, but also how the system itself generates a self-perpetuating logic, i.e. how it continues to reproduce national collective identities through norms, rules and institutions (Hall 1999: 49-50).

Hall’s work raises an important problem that directly translates into questions about Ottoman decline; namely the precise social origin and nature of nationalism, its social function and its relation to wider transformation within the international system. However, there are a variety of problems with the solutions he offers. Firstly, the idea that change is prompted by emerging social groups seeking new forms of self-identification and social recognition leaves out the crucial question about the social origin of this ‘will-to-identity’. This is not to deny the existence of desires of collectives to be recognized as a social or political community as such, but to observe that their social origin needs to be explained and the constitution of the collective interest needs to be problematized. Hall’s reflections on the problematic notion of ‘national’ interests are somewhat ambiguous in this regard. While he criticises the realist static notion, his own argument appears to accept an unproblematic vision of a rationally conceivable common good (Hall 1999: 14-15). Some further elaborations on these issues are important due to the central causal role Hall assigns to change in collective identities and interests to account for wider systemic transformations.

However, before being drawn into the analysis, the origins of these variables themselves need to be identified more clearly. Thus, what Hall refers to as the ‘nationalization of state actors’ in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even though central to his theory, ultimately remains only very loosely explained as “systemic interactions” (Hall 1999: 29):

“...changes in co-constituted individual and collective identity result in changes in the legitimating principles of global and domestic social order, and consequent changes in the institutional forms of collective action, through which that integrity is expressed to their societies. (...) This new structure manifests the new societal identity and system change.”

(Hall 1999: 29)

Even though Hall himself appears to agree that it is in fact necessary to identify “factors that conclusively generate strong collective self-identification” (Hall 1999: 12), his emphasis is on the structural outcomes of national identity formation, leaving the explanation for the first part of the equation to an uncritical appropriation of the vast body of the theories of nationalism. This is problematic insofar as these theories themselves are incomplete and, indeed, as Hall points out, understand the origins of nationalism as “endogenous” (Hall 1999: 73). Yet, it is especially the wider systemic transformations, supposedly the result of a change in the nature of sovereignty, which are absent from this theorization of nationalism.<sup>8</sup> This is particularly important since Hall himself later acknowledges that the international system reproduces a certain form of identity creation, referred to as ‘Sequence 2’ (Hall 1999: 49), hinting, but never elaborating the essentially international conditions of nationalism’s emergence. Referring to the relationship between national collective identities, the wider international structures and their mutual constitution, appears to be a mere reformulation of Wendt’s structure-agency problem in identity terms. By explaining that not only states, but also national collectives are both agents as well as objects of change, Hall does not appear to provide a significant advance either within Constructivism or in terms of IR Theory, as this only concerns the mode of reproduction of national identities, but not their social origins.

Furthermore, while Hall’s recognition of the specificity of ‘nationalism’ is valuable, the related charge of ‘underspecification’ of actors leaves the overall systemic logic of structural Realism untouched. Waltz explicitly accepts the possibility of change within the cultural or political constitution as well as in the number of actors, thereby still leaving their externally conditioned functional

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<sup>8</sup> See chapter 2

similarity intact as long as international anarchy prevails. Hall's criticism that Realism cannot account for shifts in the form of sovereignty - here from Westphalian to post-Westphalian - will more than likely find no resonance with realists who see this as a non-problem because these changes never alter the anarchical structure of the system. Both national and dynastic polities have to survive within the anarchical, all-determining structure of IR (Waltz 1979). This is hard to argue with, especially as new actors are far more commonly established by acts of political violence or war, i.e. by an assertion of the realist principle of self-help, rather than as a result of inter-subjective recognition.

However, the implicit acceptance of structural Realism and the explicit endorsement of theories of nationalism constitute the real problems with Hall's approach. Instead of arriving at a fruitful re-formulation, Hall seems to 'tag on' a theory of how national collective identities shape the international system, instead of developing an international theory that can accommodate their emergence as well as their effects. Thus, in terms of IR Theory, Hall's account constitutes a useful addition, an illumination of minor issues within IR, but he does not convincingly undermine Realism or substantiate extant social constructivist approaches further. In other words, despite Hall's promising formulation of the national problematique in IR, he does not provide an inter-national theory in the sense of fruitfully conceptualizing the contradiction between a universal and universalizing modern order and a fragmented and fragmenting form of national sovereignty.

#### *Constructivism's Contribution*

Nevertheless, if Hall cannot reconcile the universal/particular contradiction, maybe a more generic understanding of Constructivism can. This might be the case, because in general, Constructivism emphasizes that environmental pressures do not automatically (re-) produce 'sameness', but tend to generate specificities and peculiar forms. This is not only true for biological evolution (Kratochwil 1996: 214), but also for the spread of the European political form. This amounts to an important critique of functionalistic IR Theory which claims, but never explains the reproductive capacity of the international system and instead relies "largely on loose organic metaphors of growth and decay and problematic analogies, such as evolutionary selection" (Kratochwil 1996: 213).

Constructivism's contribution is valuable mostly for its powerful and important critique of Realism. First of all, the possibility of change and



transformation implies that Constructivism rightly points out the historical specificity of actors and structures and the need to uncover their social roots. This also applies, therefore, to another aspect of the inter-state system, i.e. the fact that it is nationally differentiated. Thus, the value of Constructivism provides three major contributions. First, it reveals the inter-subjectively constituted nature of international as well as national structures that were previously understood as exogenously given. Second, it emphasizes the social construction of identity and culture, and, as a consequence, it thirdly differentiates between various, historically malleable meanings of anarchy.

Constructivist premises, if looked at superficially, do not seem to raise any contentions. Agents create structures that, in turn, create a limited scope of action. Arguing that the material world acquires meaning only through social interaction and understanding is somewhat less contentious a claim than elevating this epistemological reflection to a universal theory of International Relations. Intra-societal interaction is not restricted to the creation of inter-subjectivity. It might be important to de-essentialize static ontologies, but this does little to explain the origin of social dynamics which inspire these social constructions. One very general problem appears to be the absence of a theory of human motivation and, for that matter, an explicit reflection on the power relations that are inherent in the various ways in which meaning is inter-subjectively created. This is especially a problem for the central notion of agency. Thus, Constructivism can explain how various agents' original intentions are shaped and controlled by the same structure that originates, at least partly, from their own actions, but it does not elaborate on the various determinations of human or state activity that may not stand in direct relation to these structures.

However, even beyond the obvious problem of a lack of social forces and (geo)political processes, Constructivism equally faces some problems within the remit of its own assumptions. Crucially, the central question as to why the international structure has created functionally similar forms of political-territorial rule, even though the "selves and identities are variable" along with their interests (Hopf 1998: 176) remains unanswered. A more explicit reflection on the specific kind of exchange that produces difference, i.e. geopolitical or economic, public or private, transnational or inter-state within the context on identity debates appears to be in order. It is, in other words, not just a 'curiosity to discover the other' as part of an

innocent cultural encounter (Inayatullah and Blaney 1996), but can be anything from curiosity to violent competition between a variety of social actors. Those are only very vaguely, if at all, identifiable as coherent social groups prior to the identity-producing interaction. This necessitates a socially and historically specific elaboration on the nature and outcome of these encounters. However, how they are conditioned and what their underlying motivations are is not captured by constructivist IR Theory. This fact points to a wider question about whether collective identities are reducible to 'systemic' outcomes or, replicating, as Palan put it, the realist essentialism Constructivism seeks to overcome by relying too heavily on a "pre-interactional order to explain persistent patterns in international affairs, reducing processes of 'inter-subjectivity' to where they had always been in realist discourse—to the status of epiphenomena" (Palan 2000: 593). The two points about the absence of power relations and the continued structural determination are related. The lack of a theory of inter-action originates in the lack of a theory of power relations or, in fact, of human motivation altogether. Nevertheless, exploring the power relations within this process of social construction is crucial for understanding Constructivism's own research agenda about the creation of identities and inter-subjective structures.

To summarize, the central problem remains Constructivism's general reluctance to engage with political and geopolitical issues altogether, but instead to resign itself to very elaborate and theoretically sophisticated reflections on processes of social and ideational generation of ontologies. While this can be a useful critique, not only of Realism, but also of an overdetermination by essentialized notions of unchangeable social structures more generally, constructivism's relationship with the material, the political, the geopolitical and power remain by and large, unclear. As Ronan Palan aptly put it, constructivism, while developing a useful 'constructivist' epistemological argument, at the same time unnecessarily supports "an illegitimate argument privileging ideas *vis-à-vis* power and interest" (Palan 2000: 590). Despite all of these problems with constructivist IR Theory, it seems that there can be little contention about the importance of illuminating certain relational and social ways in which knowledge, meaning and by extension identity and interests are socially constructed and shape the world we live in. It raises questions, nevertheless, about the reach of constructivist methodology. In other words, how much of social reality in general and of international relations in particular can actually be explained by pointing out the inter-subjective construction of interests and identities? More

importantly, can this reflection on the social construction of the constitutive ‘parts’ of the international system in and of itself explain the way states interact? It is due to these deficiencies of Constructivism that it is better understood as a useful methodological reflection, rather than a theory in its own right.

### *From Constructivism to Historical Sociology*

In part out of the frustration with Constructivism’s apolitical and, more importantly, a-geo-political position another ‘historic turn’ brought Historical Sociology into International Relations (Hobden 1998; Hobden and Hobson 2002). Like Constructivism, Historical Sociology reveals “how institutions and practices were formed”. However, it is arguably more emancipated in its project to denaturalise “that which is presented, in any specific context, as inevitable” by revealing the political origin of these structures (Halliday 2002: 247). As such, Historical Sociology as a theory is less committed to systemic constraints and provides more space for human and state agency. In this way, the development of a Historical Sociology of International Relations provides another alternative to the dead ends of the inter-paradigm debate. Historical Sociology overcomes the realist stasis and fruitfully historicises the origins of the international system, rather than essentializing them. As with Constructivism, a variety of approaches have emerged that are – contra Constructivism– less concerned with systemic aspects and more concerned, as Michael Barnett put it, with “*domestic and societal-level* phenomena that their respective disciplines judged as important, including industrialisation, democratisation, capitalism, bureaucratisation, state formation, social inequality, class conflict and revolution” (Barnett 2002: 103). These changes are consequently re-interpreted taking into consideration their respective geopolitical contexts. Since these contexts are equally shaped by actors, International Historical Sociology appears to provide a reformulation of the agent-structure problem in more historical terms. As opposed to Constructivism, however, it reconstructs the peculiar origins of varying international systems starting from the concrete historical, not the abstract logical. Instead of a “decided preference for abstract, systemic models that could generate timeless laws pertaining to inter-state interactions” (Barnett 2002: 100), change is conceptualized by identifying historically particular and regionally specific roots of social transformation.

### **1.5 Geopolitical Competition as Agent of Social Change**

In terms of quantity of output, the most significant approach within Historical Sociology has developed from a Weberian tradition mainly emanating from the work of Otto Hintze whose most fundamental assumption was about the intrinsic inter-relation between state-formation and war (Hintze and Oestreich 1962; Hintze and Gilbert 1975; Tilly 1975). These Neo-Weberian approaches have identified two shortcomings in the extant literature on social transformation and International Relations. On the one hand, Liberalism and Historical Materialism in particular were charged with providing endogenous and economic explanations for social change only (Giddens 1985). This failed to adequately address and incorporate the problem of state autonomy as well as geopolitical relations, without which the understanding of transformation remains incomplete (Skocpol 1979: 19-24). As far as International Relations in general and Realism in particular goes, a similar criticism applies. While adequately identifying the importance of the 'third image' (Waltz 1959: 159), realists in fact used an underdeveloped concept of the state as a 'black box' rather than a social construct. This project of 'bringing the state back in' (Evans, Rueschemeyer et al. 1985; Hobson 1997) and arguing for its autonomy as a social actor while at the same time emphasizing the relevance of international factors for explaining social change increasingly led to a fusion of Weberian Historical Sociology and International Relations, which aimed at historicising the emergence of the international-state system as a whole (Tilly 1990; Spruyt 1996).

#### *Geopolitical Competition and Institutional Selection*

Systemic geopolitical competition, therefore, takes on a central role in the Weberian understanding of change. In the light of intensified warfare exercising pressure on individual societies, an abstract modern state develops, as a means of defense, efficient governmental institutions where decision making is guided by rational *raison d'état* thinking rather than private, dynastic accumulation (Tilly 1985). The central question for Neo-Weberian Historical Sociology is, therefore, whether the administration in form of a centralized bureaucracy is autonomous. 'Autonomy' is understood here as equivalent to 'modern' which stands in contrast to Weber's ideal type of a 'patrimonial' bureaucracy. Thus, a modern bureaucracy is in place, once it has developed an understanding of a general and rational, rather than private interest. A truly modern bureaucracy is willing and able to defend this newly realized public interest against other particular or class interests, including their own. Hence, the

public centralized state becomes separated and is independent from the private society. The formation of a modern bureaucracy plays a central part in understanding this shift from pre-modern, personal dynastic politics to the depersonalized general will of modern states. Survival is only guaranteed once a *rational* fiscal regime develops that channels the state's economic resources towards external defense, rather than private dynastic accumulation. However, this inter-national dimension only comes to 'make states' once it started to 'make wars' (Tilly 1985). While conflict is a transhistorical reality, it is only within the modernizing international order, characterized by unprecedented levels of geopolitical competition, that the semi-Darwinist mechanism imposes its institutional selective rationale (Giddens 1985; Tilly 1985; Mann 1986; Tilly 1990; Mann 1993; Spruyt 1994, 1996; Hobson 1997).

At the societal level, the Neo-Weberian focus is on the rational, fiscal-administrative institutional capabilities of the modern bureaucratic state which it has gained through the purifying process of geopolitical engagements. These approaches, therefore, emphasize physically, rather than economically, induced social change as the crucial element in the history of state-formation and, in this case, imperial decline (Tilly 1990: 91-95). Nation-states are the result of a war-prone competitive external process. Institutional, economic and fiscal innovations emerged as a result of external enmity. Out of this process, the consolidated territorial and internally pacified nation-state emerges as the most durable of a variety of previously existing state forms. The process of institutional 'outselection' within a geopolitically competitive environment generates through warfare the multiplicity of institutionally similar, yet culturally diverse, 'efficient' state apparatuses, which make up the modern international order.

Hendrik Spruyt's account, for example, implies that 'Empires', as opposed to nation-states (Spruyt 2005), cannot ensure the viability, coherence, revenue and, by extension, military competitiveness to survive in typically 'modern' international relations:

The system selected out those types of units that were, competitively speaking, less efficient. In other words, the competitive nature of the system determined the nature of the constitutive units. (...) Actors intentionally created a system of sovereign, territorial states. They preferred a system that divided the sphere of cultural and economic interaction into territorial parcels with clear hierarchical authorities (Spruyt 1996: 180).

This new institutional base is the most competitive one because it produces the revenue and by extension the most forceful military apparatus capable of withstanding the geopolitical pressures emanating from simultaneously modernizing 'units'. This happens by solving the discrepancy between "emerging translocal markets and existing political arrangements" (Spruyt 1994: 529).

In contrast, Charles Tilly's main concern lies with historical enquiries about how different forms of collective violence have engendered different social transformations (Tilly 1978). With regards to the formation of the modern nation-state, two paths of state building, the coercion-intensive and the capital-intensive, are central in Tilly's account (Tilly 1990: 20-33). Both start with an assumption about the necessity for transformation generated by war making, having intensified the two previously existing forms of revenue extraction. Coercion-intensive states are characterized by their mainly agricultural regions and the absence of urban centres (e.g. Eastern Europe and Russia), whereas capital-intensive regions have more developed cities and commercial classes that can be taxed for the benefit of boosting the central administration's revenue (like the Netherlands). However, the most successful state form is the capitalised coercive-intensive regions (notably France and Britain) where capitalists are incorporated into the state structures through constitutional assemblies, a centralized bureaucracy and a salaried standing army develops. While coercion-intensive state forms extract revenue in kind through direct territorial control of a mainly agrarian society, capital intensive polities extract monetary resources from markets and commerce, including free city states. Hence, in the former, presumably feudalist form, taxation takes place through the application of politically constituted force, while in the latter, presumably capitalist form, state income is generated from value-added production and market inequalities. It is, however, a combination of the two, an "intermediate *capitalized coercion* mode," that proved the geopolitically most successful form. This mode was to evolve gradually into the nation-state form. In the capitalized coercion mode, "rulers did some of each, but spent more of their effort than did their capital-intensive neighbours on incorporating capitalists and sources of capital directly into the structures of their states" (Tilly 1990: 30).

The capitalized coercion mode created a capital-intensive base which permits a profitable fiscal regime, while at the same time relying on a coercive apparatus that is necessary to establish internal order and provide effective external defense. The

most important institutional innovation this new structure supports, however, is the monopolization of the means of violence in a professionally trained, salaried standing army. Once external defense is centralized and masses are mobilized instead of the sword carrying nobility, war assumes a different quality. It now becomes total war, transforming all other societies through this new form of armed conflict. These differentiated forms of development eventually converge into the latter, most successful state form due to the constraints imposed by structural geopolitical competition.

Tilly also points out that institutional and organizational weakness is not only based on patrimonial rule and coercion-intensive revenue generation, but also, to some degree, on internal demographic diversity of pre-modern societies. Competitiveness, thus, not only involves fiscal-administrative structures and military capabilities, but also the ethnic and cultural homogenization of subject people. As Tilly put it:

“In one of their more self-conscious attempts to engineer state power, rulers frequently sought to homogenize their populations in the course of installing direct rule. (...) But homogeneity had many compensating advantages: within a homogeneous population, ordinary people were more likely to identify with their rulers, communication could run more efficiently, and an administrative innovation that worked in one segment was likely to work elsewhere as well. People who sensed a common origin, furthermore, were more likely to unite against external threats” (Tilly 1990: 106f).

However, the function of a homogenized subject people exceeds its use as a mass army, however. There is also a normative element derived from the much discussed right to national self-determination which implies “that homogeneous peoples had distinctive political interests, that members of homogeneous peoples owed strong loyalties to the states that embodied their heritage” (Tilly 1994b: 133). This international normative dimension about the principle of national self determination is wedded, therefore, to the imperatives of external defense, thereby establishing a two-way connection between war and the principle of popular sovereignty. This implies that the usually violent processes of ethnic homogenization are both functionally necessary as well as underpinning the basis of legitimate modern political authority. Thus, geopolitical competition is the agent of change, be that either through direct bureaucratic reform or mediated via the break-down of ancient regimes and a subsequent state (re)formation (Skocpol 1979).

### *The Weberian Contribution*

At this point a wider problem of Weberian international sociology is revealed. While Weberians have extensively reflected on the relationship between state-formation and geopolitics in a territorial and institutional/bureaucratic sense, the same cannot be said about the 'modern' state's *national* character. In other words, if there is any ontological substance to 'nationalism' beyond an outcome of social engineering by political authority, then what about its relationship to state-forming geopolitical processes? Here, cultural diversity unproblematically translates into the territorial multiplicity of the inter-state system. However, geopolitical multiplicity cannot be explained with reference to rational institutional efficiency only. This would suggest the emergence of larger 'units' that can exploit economies of scale, rather than smaller state-forms which tend to increase transaction costs. Naturalizing homogeneity, rather than historicising ethnic and cultural differentiation, implies an acceptance of primordial arguments about the origins of various nationalisms (Smith 2001). It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Tilly largely ignores the modernist literature on the subject (Tilly 1994b: 132-33).<sup>9</sup> Thus, Tilly appears to implicitly endorse a primordial understanding of national/cultural divisions. National diversification cannot be explained with reference to a process of institutional outselection, unless underlying unchangeable and primordial ethnic divisions are presupposed. This is so because rational efficiency per se would generate unity, not fragmentation, let alone the dismemberment of formally unified polities. As this underlying multiplicity of national forms is in fact presupposed and not explained, the social origin of diversity still requires further investigation.

However, this illuminates a further-ranging problem as well though. Above and below the process of institutional innovation, the neo-Weberian approach remains sociologically underdeveloped. On the one hand, the social transformation is understood as externally conditioned, with a choice between successful institutional adaptation and the state's death. It does not capture, therefore, the various social outcomes that are not easily categorized in either of these two categories of success and non-success, such as belated success or partial failure. Equally, it does not sociologically decode the social origin and nature of geopolitical engagements, but presupposes, rather than explains war as the social engine of transformation. Modern standing armies only intensify an already established state of perpetual inter-

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<sup>9</sup> Here Tilly concedes with reference to Eric Hobsbawm's modernist argument on the issue (Hobsbawm 1990), that he simply "will not compete with him on that hunting ground [of explaining the origins of Nationalism]".



European warfare. Hence, modern total war is thought to have generated the conditions of its own origin. The argument becomes a regression ad infinitum. Or rather, it reifies the static realist ontology of constant and perpetual geopolitical competition. Thus, as John Hobson has argued, ‘while neo-Weberianism *promises* to go beyond Neo-realism, much of it in fact perfectly replicates Neo-realism”, which makes its description as “sociological Realism” perfectly accurate (Hobson, J. M. 2002: 64). However, this leaves open the question as to how to understand geopolitics, assuming its importance, without reifying a realist argument.

### *The ‘Second Wave’*

According to Hobson, this criticism of Weberian Historical Sociology as ‘sociological Realism’ only applies to the ‘first wave’ namely Skocpol and Tilly. This is in contrast to the ‘second wave,’ the main representatives of which are Hobson and Michael Mann. Both are thought to provide a decidedly non-realist form of Weberian Historical Sociology of International Relations (Hobson, J. M. 2002: 65). Like IR Theory, the end of the Cold War has triggered this theoretical advance. Given the wave of the criticisms of Realism, Weberian scholars grew conscious not to be identified as a mere historical sociological add-on to this increasingly tarnished approach and tried to establish a more autonomous approach. Interestingly, the way in which this was done was via the incorporation of constructivist thought.

According to Hobson, the ‘first wave’ suffers from two problems inherent in Neo-realism but also neoliberal institutionalism. He charges Skocpol and Tilly with reproducing the practices of ‘chronofetishism’ and ‘tempocentrism’ (Hobson, J. 2002: 5). The first term describes the problem of sealing the present off from the past by understanding the contemporary order as “autonomous, natural, spontaneous and immutable” (Hobson, J. 2002: 9). Realism, according to this critique, naturalizes contemporary social institutions and relations and presents as primordial and unchangeable what is, in fact, historically specific and malleable. Beyond this ahistorical understanding of the contemporary world, Realism equally projects the present socio-political make-up of the world back into the past. This is what Hobson calls ‘tempocentrism’, i.e. “a methodology in which theorists look at *history* through a ‘chronofetishist lens’”. In other words, the practice of tempocentrism projects the present back into the past and seeks to conform historically diverse forms to “a reified and naturalized present” that is formed by contemporary institutions. It is “in this way [that], the study of international relations takes on a ‘transhistorical’ quality” (Hobson,

J. 2002: 9). While having succeeded in bringing 'the international back in', the 'first wave' has failed to integrate either 'the domestic' or a notion of geopolitics beyond military necessities. This, most problematically, involves the denial of an 'international agential power' of the state (Hobson, J. M. 2002: 65-66). It is this lack of state agency, outside of a geopolitical reformulation of Weber's 'iron cage', that the 'second wave' Weberians seek to rectify.

Starting from the question of 'state autonomy,' an extensive debate about state-society relations has evolved within the 'state debate' of Neo-Weberian Historical Sociology. Pure autonomy, according to some scholars, is possible only in Despotism, which, however, only provides for an instable form of rule as it generates dissent (Hobson 2000). Another understanding of state autonomy is, therefore proposed by John Hobson who argues that "state autonomy is measured in terms of a state's degree of *embeddedness* within society" rather than through either a pure abstraction or a pure hierarchy (Hobson 1998: 293). Hobson proposes a 'structurationist' approach whereby international structures and state-agency are co-constitutive. Contrary to the 'first wave' semi-Darwinistic inside-out theorizations of social transformations, Hobson suggests that international and domestic structures are constituted by state agency and provide, therefore, both opportunities as well as constraints for state agency (Hobson 2001: 411; Hobson, J. M. 2002: 75). This approach avoids, therefore, the realist practice of 'kicking the state back out' by emphasizing the independent agency of the state.

### *The Autonomy of the State*

While the emphasis on 'international agential power' provides an important advance over base/superstructure and other economistic models as well as a quasi-realist international structural determination of state agency, the notion of 'state autonomy' itself suffers from an ahistorical and asociological concept of 'the state'. Discussions about 'state'-society' relations and degrees of 'social embeddedness' or 'agential capacity' of states vis-à-vis 'their' society overlook the social content of the state. More precisely, they lack a meaningful sociology of the administration itself. In other words, this notion of autonomy discounts historically variable constitutions and contents of state power by implying the existence of states as rational and unitary agents who are only constrained by international pressures. While these international constraints cannot be discounted, it does not follow that states are only directed by

purified internationally determined *raison d'état* thinking. Rather, state agency is better understood as the outcome of social struggles 'within'.

This problem can be illustrated with reference to the Ottoman case. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 'the state' was constituted by a collection of agents and institutions, central and peripheral, all representing different and changing vested interests. The attempt to create a 'coercion-intensive state' in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, starting with Selim III in 1789 aimed at restoring central power as much as it followed a defensive rationale. Until then, power was dispersed, not only in the periphery, but also within the central administration. While a 'rational' Weberian bureaucracy started to emerge in the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the Sublime Porte, these 'rational' and de-personal governmental agents faced high levels of resistance by other sectors of the state, whose vested interests were challenged by the reform process. Even though just defending their own social positions, various agents had always claimed to act on behalf of the central state, or rather the *Şeriat* (the 'good order'). This applied first and foremost the Sultan and his lavish households, but from the 17<sup>th</sup> century also to patrimonial bureaucrats as well as various competing branches of the military and the clergy or *ulema*. Thus, rather than implementing one 'rational' (foreign) policy goal, the Sultan's centralization agenda has to be seen as the surface appearance of an underlying social struggle between transforming social interest groups within the Ottoman 'state'. Hence, "the external *may* constrain, or impel, states in their foreign policy, but this is *not necessarily* so" (Halliday 2005: 48), since outcomes cannot be reduced to an outside-in and above-below smooth rationalization. However, the notion of autonomous state-agency is not only problematic with regards to pre-modern 'unbounded' social formations or in cases of 'overlapping' sovereignty, but equally pertains (if to a lesser degree) to the state's contemporary 'modern' and territorial form where socio-political struggles still mediate and restrict 'rational' autonomous decision making.

### *Causal Pluralism*

Another advance of the 'second wave' of Weberian Historical Sociology is its causal pluralism, which is said to overcome not only economistic and reductionist historical materialist approaches, but also the 'first wave' and its geopolitical determinism. Instead, a 'multifactor approach' (Max Weber's idea of a multiplicity of social causes) is introduced. The most influential example is Michael Mann's work in this regard. He identifies four sources of autonomous social power relations, namely, military, political, economic as well as ideological. These relations are either

expressed in overlapping networks or in formal organizations. The strength of individual social powers is, according to Mann, not determined by the strength of human will or needs, but by the strength of the organizational means implemented for the pursuit of these needs (Mann 1986: 2; Mann 1993). Hence, the hierarchy of social powers changes according to historical context and material or reproductive forces do not necessarily take precedence over ideational, military and purely political forms of social power. This also means that power relations overlap and are not autonomous, but intertwined. Thus, the attractiveness of Mann's IMEP model and other forms of multi-dimensional causal approaches lie in their adaptability preventing the determinism of positivist explanatory models. Various social forces are never either 'reducible to one another' nor do they stand in isolation, but are 'co-constitutive' (Runciman 1989). This multicausal approach, thus, provides a malleable explanatory tool-kit capable of capturing the specificities of any given social transformation, including Ottoman disintegration (Jacoby 2004a, b, 2008b) and subsequent Turkish state-formation (Trimberger 1978).

Despite appearing attractive, the notion of causal plurality equally bears recognizable problems. Michael Mann's IMEP model, for example, can be criticised on the very grounds of Weberian plurality it stands on due to its limitation to only four specific social powers. This led to a debate within Weberian Historical Sociology mainly concerned with the issue as to whether military power should or should not be distinguished from political power (Hobson 1998: 287). This discussion is revealing in some ways, however, as it points to the fact that it is by no means clear what can be considered a 'social power' in the first place. In a complex world, with various contradicting 'forces' at play, an infinite number could be almost arbitrarily identified and mobilized as explanations for social transformation. This is in part due to the fact that Weber's original argument was inconclusive as to the definition of a social force in general, let alone specifying three or four distinctive ones. With this lack of clarity as to what social power is constituted by and a potential indefinite proliferation of various forms of social power, the causal explanation of concrete events and change becomes somewhat arbitrary, potentially leading to, as Ellen Wood put it, a denial of "causality altogether" (Wood 1995: 174). This issue as well as the clear institutional separation between individual sources of social power in an ideal-typical fashion is problematic for other reasons too. Specifically, Mann does not provide a general theorization of the causal relationships within this quartet of social powers, or, indeed, their historical origin. However, the ability to distinguish

precisely *four* social powers out of a generic call for ‘multiple’ causes is due to the fact that they are in fact specific to capitalist modernity (Wood 1995: 174). This constitutes an immediate problem for the Weberian approach and its application to the Ottoman case. Mann assigns transhistorical validity to the social powers he has identified when they are in fact historically peculiar categories. Mann himself has treated the Ottoman Empire more as an object, rather than a subject of international relations in his work (Mann 1993). Nevertheless all ‘sources of social power’ could be historically discerned within the Ottoman context. The analytical value of this separation within the Ottoman context is doubtful, however. Since economic, political, ideological and military powers were in fact consolidated within competing central and peripheral ruling classes, a dissection of their various ‘sources’ appears somewhat counter-productive. Rather than revealing anything about the social origin of the transformation, an attempt to dissect distinct sources of social power would obscure the fact that military, political, economic and social powers are fused and would, therefore, prevent a holistic understanding of the dynamics underlying the process of Ottoman decline.

### **1.6 World Systems Theory and Expansion of the World Economy**

Localizing the dynamic of domestic change on the systemic international level is not unique to Neo Weberian approaches. This method has also been endorsed by a Marxist strand of Historical Sociology. Initially this was developed in form of the ‘Dependency School’ by the Latin American economists André Gunder Frank and Paul Prebisch (Prebisch 1986; Frank 1989). This school combined with the French Annales School of Ferdinand Braudel (Braudel 1972) into a wider-ranging research agenda labelled ‘World Systems Theory’ (WST). This theory, or rather set of theoretical assumptions and historical sociological enquiries, was further developed by the American Sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (Wallerstein 1974; Wallerstein, I. M. 1979; Wallerstein 1980) who now counts as the main representative of this school.

The core assumption of the World Systems Approach or World Systems Theory (WST) can be summarized as follows: As opposed to comparative historical materialist analyses, WST developed a more international or global understanding of social transformation that moved the focus from local subsistence economies towards the central ontology of trade and exchange as part of an emerging capitalist world economy (Wallerstein, I. M. 1979; Wallerstein 1984). These assumptions are

historically derived from the European transformations during the long 16<sup>th</sup> century, where agricultural societies moved from being primarily oriented towards subsistence purposes towards production for the world market. This caused the emergence of a system of exchange and commerce, the development of free cities and overseas empires.

This commercial expansion, in turn, gradually evolved into the modern World System comprising different forms of labour control, which were connected to the establishment of national states. Thus, different states emerge as superstructures of an increasingly differentiated global division of labour as a result of the societies' efforts to adapt to the new international imperatives. This establishes an international hierarchy of state/economy complexes divided into a surplus extracting center, an emerging semi-periphery and peripheral states concentrating on direct production. The core states exploit the surplus labour of the peripheral states through the mechanism of unequal exchange, rather than direct control. Thus, peripheral societies export mainly raw commodities at cheap prices, which are exchanged with the industrial, high value added output of the core states. Hence, the capitalist global economy is characterized by a self-perpetuating form of surplus extraction through market inequalities, which in turn determines the nature of the inter-state system as a functional derivative of this global system of capitalist reproduction. The main differentiating criteria of states and indeed the core explanation for territorial-political separation are therefore different regimes of labour control depending on the respective society's adaptation to the requirements of the capitalist world economy. In theory, social transformation is, thus, explained as part of the changing location of particular societies within the global division of labour, mediated by commercial expansion and contraction. In practice, however, as inequalities are structurally determined, transformation appears unlikely if not impossible. The only change that does occur, however, is the change of hegemonies within the group of core states, carrying out 'system maintenance'. While Venice and Genoa held this position in the early stage of capitalist development, these were followed by hegemonic successions from the Netherlands, to Britain, to the United States.

Changes in labour regimes not only changed economic forms of reproduction but also political and, by extension, geopolitical structures. Changes in the inter-state

system are, therefore, understood as institutional or ‘superstructural’ adjustments to the requirements of the expanding capitalist world economy:

“All our states have been creations of the modern world, even if some could make a plausible claim to cultural linkage with pre-modern political entities. And least of all, has the interstate system always been there. The interstate system is the political superstructure of the capitalist world-economy and was a deliberate invention of the modern world” (Wallerstein 1995: 141).

The process of incorporation into the world economy therefore causes a change in the form of political rule as well. Incorporation into the world-economy means necessarily the insertion of the political structures into the interstate system. This means that the old political structures which already exist in the areas of capitalist expansion must either transform themselves into ‘states within the interstate system’, be replaced by new political structures or be absorbed by other states already within the interstate system (Wallerstein 1989: 170). Within this linear outside-in conceptualization of history, pre-modern states are primarily understood to be ‘World Empires’ where surplus extraction is carried out through the direct control over extensive territories through extra-economic means.

Hence, WST understands national differentiation not only as corresponding to the global division of labour, but argues that the inter-state system is in fact historically constituted by capitalist expansion. The inter-state system is therefore understood not only as specific to a broader notion of modernity, but also to capitalist International Relations. In other words, it translates the original Marxist axiom of class-divisions into inter-state divisions, whereby individual state/labour regimes represent particular, hierarchically ordered class interests.

Beyond this economic determination of political structures, Wallerstein went on to develop more dedicated arguments on the problem of racial and national differentiation which he acknowledged to be, on the surface, somewhat paradoxical divisions given the global reach of capitalism. ‘Peoplehood’, as Wallerstein puts it, consists either in the biological category of race, the cultural category of ethnicity, or the socio-political category of nation. However, even though all three of them constitute forms of collective identities, i.e. they all belong to *one* abstract category of ‘peoplehood’, a further differentiation into three more distinct sociological concepts appears necessary. For Wallerstein this conceptual division reflects the structural division in the world economy. “The concept of ‘race’ is related to the axial division

of labour (...) the concept of 'nation' is related to the political superstructure [and] the concept of 'ethnic group' is related to household structures that permit the maintenance of large components of non-waged labour in the accumulation of capital", implying that the "axial division of labour" is replicated in a "spatial division of labour" (Wallerstein 1987; Wallerstein 1991: 79). Thus, not only sovereign national states, but also their underlying principle of multiple nationalisms, owe their existence to the functional requirements of the capitalist world system. Nations are functional derivatives from the division of labour.

#### *World Systems Theory and Ottoman Historiography*

Beyond being one of the most prominent adaptations of Historical Materialism within the discipline of International Relations, WST has also had a profound impact on Ottoman historiography (Karpas 1972a; Keyder 1976a; Islamoglu and Keyder 1978; Wallerstein, I. 1979; Kasaba 1988; Islamoglu 2004). Like the rest of the world, Ottoman social relations are determined by their position within the world economy, which itself consists in shifting relations of global exchange and the international division of labour. Thus, Wallerstein's differentiation between 'World Empires' and 'States' is frequently mobilized to explain the Ottoman transformation more specifically.

Similarly to the Geopolitical Competition model, many historical materialist explanations about the decline of the Ottoman Empire ended up following this linear outside-in conceptualization of history, whereby, the Ottoman 'Empire' was by definition outdated and destined for transforming as a result of capitalist expansion. Applied in concrete terms, this means that the Ottoman Empire entered the capitalist world economy in the 17th and 18th centuries when 'Ottoman trade with the outside ... ceased to be transit trade and became increasingly less administered and increasingly more an economic process of exchange of Ottoman primary goods for manufactured European products' (Sunar 1979: 369), thereby shifting the Ottoman Empire into the 'periphery' of the world economy. Kasaba and Wallerstein apply this theory to the social transformation of the Ottoman society:

[I]ncorporation involves a restructuring of the production processes and political system of an area such that the incorporated area becomes an integrated part of the axial division of labor of the capitalist world-economy and a functioning part of the interstate system (Kasaba and Wallerstein 1983: 336).



In short, separatist movements and territorial divisions are seen as outflows of the global division of labour, determining political organization functionally as well as spatially.

### *The World Systems Contribution*

Apart from theories of imperialism, WST was long seen as the only significant contribution of Historical Materialism to International Relations Theory. The replication of social, class divisions at the inter-state level arguably amounts to a Marxist domestic/international analogy. Class struggles become struggles whereby states, or groups of states, rather than providing the primary arena for social struggle, come to represent coherent – bourgeois – class interests. Thus, class interests become national interests and social struggle becomes identical with inter-state economic struggles.

However, this understanding of the inter-state system, which leaves no space for geopolitical struggles that are *not* economically determined, has been frequently attacked for effectively reifying the base-superstructure model. This critique mostly came from within Marxism (Brenner 1977; Denemark and Thomas 1988). Etienne Balibar, on the other hand, argues in the same volume he edited together with Wallerstein on Race, Nation and Class (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991), that the commonly assumed congruence between national sovereignty and modern capitalism “needs qualifying in several ways” and, further, that “it is quite impossible to ‘deduce’ the nation from capitalist relations of production” (Balibar 1991: 89). This does not amount to an abandoning of the base-superstructure model, but contends that the origins of national rule are located in a multiplicity of different bourgeoisies, rather than one global or transnational one necessitating the inter-state system for its reproduction. Instead, the multiplicity of nation-states is to be found in the “concrete configurations of class struggle and not ‘pure’ economic logic”, leading Balibar to abandon “linear developmental schemas once and for all” (Balibar 1991: 90). Thus, Balibar does not necessarily locate the social origin of national differentiation in the division of labour into core and periphery, even though consolidated nation-states eventually come to reflect these functional divisions in his view. Despite this last minute turn towards WST, Balibar’s recognition of the non-linear and open-ended nature of the political process of state formation offers an important, if implicit, critique of Wallerstein’s structuralist understanding of the origin of nationalism and the inter-state system.

However, this structuralism is not only problematic in terms of International Relations, or with regards to explaining national differentiations, but also in purely Marxist terms alone. While change and transformation constitute central categories, these are not thought of as voluntaristic outcomes. Human agency, in other words, disappears behind the unstoppable inner workings of the world market, calling into question the emancipatory potential of this kind of Historical Materialism. Implicitly, however, agency appears to be assigned to a mercantile bourgeoisie which is thought to constitute the reforming and/or revolutionary class (Stoianovich 1960; Göçek 1996). This is highly problematic, for in many cases these social strata were incoherent, non-homogeneous or non-existing. To the extent that they did exist, they sometimes had no stake in the political process or were granted patrimonial privileges more beneficial than the legal certainty of modern states. Overall, it seems very problematic to discern an a priori bourgeois interest in national revolt.

More generally speaking this suggests that a structural Marxist interpretation with its emphasis on economically and internationally determined social change fails to incorporate historically specific, non-linear forms of socio-political change. WST, as Theda Skocpol puts it, attempts “to treat state forms and ‘strength’ (e.g. centralization and bureaucratization) as simple functions of societies’ class structures and positions in the world-capitalist economic division of labour” (Skocpol 1973: 31). In fact, it could be argued from a historical materialist perspective that WST fails to recognize the dialectical and contradictory nature of capitalist development itself (Cox 1981). World system historiography elevates the gradual evolution of exchange relations within and outside of societies, like the Ottoman, to a generic explanatory device, rather than understanding these relations as part of a specific historical development that *requires* explanation. Observing historical shifts in the commercial relations of various societies and the way in which they impact can provide for valuable insights. However, it hardly makes for a comprehensive explanation of complex and dialectical social transformations, if it is understood as a one-way outside-in automatism.

### **1.7 The problem of International Determinism**

In summary, it can be observed that both established strands in Historical Sociology of International Relations, Neo Weberian Historical Sociology as well as World Systems Theory rely heavily on the modernizing capacity of European (capitalist)

modernity. The former emphasizes the generative capacity of warfare in general and of modern, total war in particular. The latter, on the other hand, understands modernity mainly in terms of an expanding capitalist economy defined in commercial terms which is characterized by an international division of labour into core and periphery states. Both approaches understand 'Empire' as an outdated form of rule and demonstrate that these modernizing tendencies transform into nation-states. While the Weberian understanding is based mainly on patrimonial, personalized rule, aristocratic warfare and coercion-intensive reproduction, World Systems Theory understands Empires as territorially extensive despotic societies whose underdeveloped agricultural societies fall prey to the inequalities of the emerging world economy.

The universalisation of the inter-state system throughout the world is frequently understood, therefore, as a part of a Hegelian teleology of progress whereby the self-assertion of the world spirit results in an uneven proliferation of 'national' revolutions and secessions. This transformative, homogenising process re-invents the modern European international system by spreading tightly organised state-society complexes or nation-states throughout the world by implanting 'pressure points' in other societies (van der Pijl 1996). Previously 'passive' societies had been in a state of social stagnation compared to the West's dynamism and progressive development. It is only through the commercial or geopolitical interaction with the emerging European system of states that progress and development is achieved by emulating Western European economic structures, political institutions, ideology and modes of reproduction. Thus, it is only by virtue of external engagement that non-European societies develop (Turner 1974, 1989).

The Ottoman Empire provides an apt empirical example to illustrate this point. In particular, it is not only held responsible for the retardation of its own society, but also for the supposedly European provinces illegitimately under its control, effectively preventing development according to their naturally European (i.e. dynamic) path. This conventional wisdom is expressed by Perry Anderson in that

"the Ottoman State, occupant of South-Eastern Europe for five hundred years, camped in the continent without ever becoming naturalized into its social and political system. It always remained largely a stranger to European culture, as an Islamic intrusion into Christendom..." (Anderson 1974: 398)

Put in simplistic terms, the problem with Perry Anderson's account of the Ottoman Empire in his 'Lineages of the Absolutist State' lies with the continuing operation of an ontological as well as epistemological East/West divide. This might seem an unfair criticism at first, given Anderson's elaborate and powerful rejection of Marx' and Engels' concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP) in his Notes on the Lineages of the Absolutist State as a politically conditioned, Orientalist understanding of the 'East' reproducing the "traditional European discourse [on Oriental Despotism in political theory<sup>10</sup>] with minimal modifications" (Anderson 1974: 429). The original formulation of this differentiation in form of the AMP had emphasized the strong central and arbitrary power of 'Asiatic Despots', in contradistinction to the emergence of a powerful nobility in Europe. 'Eastern' societies, by contrast, had a tyrannical and arbitrary ruler and no influential nobility in the periphery. This also implied the absence of a stable institution of private property. As a result, the static character of Asiatic societies and their lack of socio-economic development manifested their backwardness as opposed to the more dynamic societies of Western Europe.

Anderson, furthermore, also attacks the wider claim inherent in the concept of the AMP, to function as a general epistemology applicable to all 'Oriental Empires'. This '*reductio ad absurdum*', i.e. the application of a generic understanding of 'Eastern' rule and social order to a vast variety of highly differentiated societies, blurs "distinct social formations into one archetype" (Anderson 1974: 494), leading to an inflation of the idea and ultimately to its devaluation (Anderson 1974: 487). He also criticises Marx and Engels for overlooking the essentially dynamic (if differentiated) character of oriental societies, wrongly assuming, like Mill, their 'stationariness' (cf. Turner 1974) in stagnant or cyclical forms of development.

However, this rejection of the AMP does not lead Anderson to challenge the underlying ontological and epistemological divide between East/West and European/non-European forms of development per se. Rather, his uncritical adaptation of mainstream Ottoman/Orientalist historiography in the chapter on the Ottoman Empire, entitled the 'House of Islam' (Anderson 1974: 361-398), seems to accept it as empirically unproblematic. In other words, Anderson himself maintains a strong belief in an essential and bounded East/West differentiation that is central to his argument without offering an alternative explanation for it (cf. Bailey and Llobera 1981: 14).

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<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed elaboration of the perception of Ottoman rule in European political theory see chapter 6.

More concretely, turning to the historical reconstruction of the Ottoman land regime he makes out a “natural tendency of the system to [...] degenerate into parasitic tax-farming” (Anderson 1974: 500). In this sense, he appears to detect a fundamental flaw within the Ottoman social structure, thus partially explaining its demise and ‘Eastern backwardness’. Equally, while acknowledging the “formally milder levels of exploitation” within the Ottoman Empire (as compared to other ‘Despotic Empires’), he maintains that these were undermined by the corruption of the state’s agents and the “malversations of its distant officers” (Anderson 1974: 471) as a structural condition, rather than as a unique historical conjuncture. He continues reproducing generalizations such as “the Islamic world was always [...] a vast, catenary system of cities separated by a neglected or despised countryside”, and identifies a “concealed disadvantage” of ‘Islamic Empires’ towards the ‘Old World as a whole’ (Anderson 1974: 517). Thus, arguably, Anderson replaces one generalization (‘Asiatic’) with another (‘Islamic’), essentially re-affirming a profound differentiation between the West and ‘Chinese and Islamic civilisations’ as “two patently divergent morphologies of state and society” (Anderson 1974: 547). In other words, his theoretical critique of the concept of the AMP remains unreconciled with his historical reconstruction of the Ottoman case, which seems to relapse into the very axioms that his critique of the AMP model was designed to overcome. This disconnect resides ultimately in the tension between allowing, on the one hand, for a proper explication of the modernising potential of the Ottoman Empire enabled by his critique of the AMP model, and a simultaneous foreclosing of this potential through the recourse to structural limits built into the Ottoman trajectory, grounded in generic differences captured by ontological geo-civilisational macro-categories. But as the ‘East’ remains a residual category in Anderson’s overall narrative, so a unified ‘West’ remains its *alter ego* as a geographical category that turns into a substantive one as it was the specific sequence and concatenation of its ‘modes of production’ – from Rome via the Middle Ages to Absolutism (Roman Law, feudal private property, rationality) – that were so many amalgamated preconditions for the break-through towards capitalism driven by ‘bourgeois revolutions’.

For it was against this conventional backdrop of a qualitative differentiation between the East and the West that Anderson develops his argument about the historically and geographically unique rise of capitalism in Europe, rather than a specific region within Europe. In contrast, it is argued here that such an a priori assumption about a ‘modal’ difference between ‘East’ and ‘West’, ‘Europe’ and

‘Asia’, ‘Islam’ and ‘the Old World’, obscures the historical and regional specificities that provide more meaningful explanations for historically peculiar and malleable processes of differentiation. As the following chapters will show, what Anderson describes as ill-fated structural flaws of the Porte’s (or in fact Islam’s) ruling regime in the periphery, pertain to certain specific moments in Ottoman history. For example, contrary to assumptions of a purely ‘Islamic’ ruling regime, the advent of Ottoman rule in the Balkans has generated the notion of the Pax Ottomanica in southeastern Europe, as it established political order in place of the arbitrary exploitation and constant inter-feudal warfare that characterised pre-Ottoman social structures (Stavrianos 2000 [1958]: 112-115).<sup>11</sup> While Anderson’s elaborations overcome, by and large, some of the misperceptions about Ottoman rule as purely static and despotic, they leave the Ottoman Empire’s function as Europe’s constitutive ‘other’, and the associated distortion in the understanding of the Ottoman transformation, intact.

This practice of distortion, articulated first and foremost through the notion of the AMP (Hindess and Hirst 1975), relying itself on the idea of ‘Oriental Despotism’ (Wittfogel 1957; Wickham 1985), has a long tradition in Western European thinking. It was frequently used as the reference point of the ‘despotic other’ on to which the enlightened West was able to project its own progressivity as described by European Renaissance writers.<sup>12</sup> “Orientalism set out to explain the progressive features of the Occident and the social stationariness of the Orient” (Turner 1994: 22). Thus, it is not necessarily only a cultural difference and a misperceived anti-capitalist attitude of Islam that is seen as the ‘origin of backwardness’ in the Ottoman Empire, but the fact of their centralized, tributary political organisation which failed to develop the same competitive dynamic as European intra-feudal geo-economic competition.

With regards to Europe, however, there are at least as many similarities as dissimilarities. Absolutist Europe saw the development towards political centralization and military reform. However, the relations of domination and surplus-

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<sup>11</sup> This term is used here in a different way. In most conventional historiographic accounts the ‘Pax Ottomanica’ refers to the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520 to 1566) when Ottoman expansion created an unprecedented era of stability in southeastern Europe. It is used here in a more generic sense though as referring to the establishment of geopolitical order conducive to the Pax Britannica in the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus by using Ottoman/Turkish influence as stabilising factor against Russian ambitions. It should also be noted that Stavrianos remains attached to a primordial understanding of Balkan nationalisms and the general de-legitimation of Ottoman rule associated with it.

<sup>12</sup> For an overview over the portrayal of the Ottoman polity as archaic and despotic in European writing see Anderson (1974: 397f); see also chapter 6.

extraction remained both personalised and surpluses divided between the King and a semi-feudal office-holding ruling class. There was no significant qualitative shift in the underlying process of surplus-extraction between feudalism and Absolutism (Teschke 2003: 189-97; Teschke 2006: 537-38). Relations of exploitation remained personalised; methods of surplus extraction were still based on political means. Thus, in the same way that European Absolutism continued to rely on personal, politically constituted relations of exploitation as a central source of income, the Ottoman centralised tax-regime was based on personal rule divided between peripheral quasi-fiefs and the Sultan as the legally codified ultimate landlord. In both cases, these personal/political relations are still not replaced by de-personalised relations of the market, but are based on a politically constituted share of sources of taxable income. The political and the economic, therefore, remain united clarifying some developmental similarities between the 'Occidental' and 'Oriental' paths, thereby rendering at least Anderson's explanation for the 'uniqueness of the West' problematic (Berktaý 1987). While the findings of this thesis do not necessarily coincide with Halil Berktaý's claims about the 'feudal' nature of Ottoman power in general, Berktaý does provide a very adequate description and understanding of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when an effective 'feudalisation' of the previously centralised Ottoman land-regime is observable.

The recovery of the 'non-uniqueness' of the East challenges the explanation of Western development as the unique origin and location of social change more generally. The challenge therefore lies in developing a theoretical framework that can accommodate the independent agency and dynamic of 'Eastern', non-European societies, avoiding deterministic and teleological understandings of transformation, without at the same time neglecting the reproductive and expansionist capacity of European societies, above all in their most recent form of capitalism. While World Systems Theory and Neo-Weberian Historical Sociology help illuminating the latter, 'European' part of this equation, they embrace a passive-adaptive understanding of the former. Due to their heavy reliance on the expansionary capacity of European modernity, and their teleological understanding of the social transformation from 'Empire' to 'States', their approaches are best described as a form of 'international determinism'.

### **1.8 Political Marxism on Capitalism and the Interstate System**

The understanding of the emergence of national states as the result of the universalisation of capitalism and the global division of labour constitutes, however, not the only historical materialist reading of this transformation from Empire to a multiplicity of nation-states. First of all, even if the above transformation is causally related to uneven capitalist development in Europe, this nevertheless does not mean that the definition of capitalism in World System terms is necessarily the most useful one. Dissatisfied by WST, other Marxist historical sociological accounts have emerged which locate the question of the specificity of Europe and the origins of capitalism within a problematique of International Relations. This also pertains to the theory of social property relations developed by Robert Brenner. Brenner proposes a de-naturalized account of capitalist development that avoids the early Marxist teleological conceptions of history and instead starts from specific social property relations and their associated social struggles. The unintended, non-linear outcomes of these conflicts lead to change, social transformation and eventually the emergence of new social property regimes, most crucially agricultural capitalism in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century England. However, due to the emphasis on the historical specificity of class constellations and social property regimes, no wider structural abstraction or overarching 'logic' is derivable from recognizing these changes (Brenner 1977, 1987). Ellen Wood followed Brenner when criticising conventional Marxist interpretations of capitalist transformation in Europe which identify the expansion of commerce from towns and cities radiating outwards through bourgeois agents into an emerging World Economy as the 'prime mover' of the transition. Addressing the politically constituted and therefore regionally variable, rather than 'logical' economic nature of the transition, Wood developed the notion of 'Political Marxism' (Wood 1991, 1995; Wood, E. M. 2002).

In this account, the origin of capitalism and its subsequent spread are understood as an unintended outcome of social struggles within the agrarian class constellation of late-feudal England. In this perspective, bourgeois or peasant social forces did not establish capitalism following an agenda for liberation or reform. Whereas peasant uprisings led to emancipation in France and to a second serfdom in Eastern Europe, it was only in England that the class tensions over property rights and the terms of exploitation produced the social conditions conducive to the rise of capitalist social relations. Thus, agrarian capitalism did not emerge as an intended objective, purposefully pursued by social actors, but as a specific outcome and by-



product of social struggles over sources of income (Brenner 1987). The core characteristic of capitalism is therefore not production for exchange on the market, but the commodification of labour power and land. Pointing out the concrete historical, rather than systemic or pre-determined social origins of capitalism, implies that capitalism is not a European or even universal necessity, built into the long-term history of Europe, but a regionally specific and historically developed, unique social property regime which “individual actors will find it rational and possible to follow” (Brenner 1987: 18). However, this acceptance only prevails as long as the social property regime can engender cohesion and is not dislodged by further social contestation, implying the potential for transformation and, by extension, agency.

Thus, Political Marxism starts from a different definition of capitalism – conceptionally, regionally and chronologically – compared to WST. Consequently, different conclusions about the relationship between the interstate system and capitalism are drawn.<sup>13</sup> Centrally, Political Marxism understands capitalism not simply as a purely economic category, but as a holistic sociological concept that captures wider social relations peculiar to modernity. Capitalism is differentiated from feudalism as a fundamentally different system of social reproduction with associated forms of political organisation. In pre-capitalist formations, the production process, or the economic is politically institutionalized. Hence, surplus extraction is carried out through extra-economic means, i.e. through direct physical and politically constituted control. Accumulation, therefore, is always political as well as necessarily associated with territorial command which, in turn, equals income (Brenner 1989: 26). Thus, economic and political powers are fused. Property is constituted through political force, rather than private contracts.

In capitalism, on the other hand, surplus extraction is no longer carried out through political violence and social relations receive a depersonalized definition. Reproduction takes place within markets in which factors of production, most importantly waged labour and land, are commodified. Appropriation, therefore, is primarily carried out through the depersonalized, economic compulsion of the market

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<sup>13</sup> Political multiplicity is not understood as a general abstraction, but as a historically specific ontology. Different social formations conduct historically specific kinds of social relations, constituting a variety of relations that do not lend themselves easily to a transhistorical dichotomous inside/outside ontology and the associated epistemology of modern International Relations theory. Political Marxism refutes the possibility of such a general abstraction and relies, instead, on historicised notions of political multiplicity, which is therefore equally not structurally maintained by the competitive ‘logic’ of the capitalist world economy (cf. Chase-Dunn 1981).

within a system of centralized, depersonalized territorial states which exercise a monopoly over the means of violence and guarantee the sanctity of contracts. Hence, this new capitalist social property regime changed the nature of sovereignty as well. Reproduction *does not* rely on direct politically substantiated extraction through extra-economic means and contains, therefore, a non-territorial or better: trans-territorial impulse. However, it *does* generate a specific *kind* of capitalist/sovereign state, which not only creates an environment of legal and physical, internal and external security for the smooth operation of the market. This new modern sovereign not only guarantees the operation of the market. Rather, it constitutes the market itself as a social form through political means. Hence, the separation between economic and political power in modern capitalist sovereignty is itself politically constituted (Wood 1981).

#### *Political Marxism as International Theory*

The major contribution of Political Marxism to International Relations resides, in principle, in the possibility of a historical materialist understanding of social transformation that avoids structuralist and economistic ‘models’ and allows for a dialectical as well as historically and regionally specific understanding of social transformation. As the nature of sovereignty changed according to specific social property regimes, they also changed the international environment within which these sovereigns operate. While Brenner and Wood have not systematically dealt with the subject matter of International Relations or Geopolitics as a distinctive problem, a variety of adaptations of Political Marxism within the discipline of International Relations have emerged over recent years.

The introduction of Political Marxism into the study of IR has prompted at least three theoretical innovations. Building on Wood’s work, Justin Rosenberg’s critique of structural Realism in *The Empire of Civil Society* emphasizes the historically specific origin of the realist concepts of anarchy and balance of power in capitalist modernity. While other inter-state systems were determined by the socio-economic nature of their constitutive elements, such as the Ancient Greek polis or the Italian city states of the Renaissance, modern sovereignty as defined by the separation of the political and the economic equally produces a determinate international system (Rosenberg 1994). Rosenberg demonstrates how the anarchical inter-state conditions and the ordering mechanism of the balance of power are predicated on the separation of the economic and the political in modern capitalist sovereignty, rather than acting

as timeless features grounded in the mere fact of societal multiplicity. The fact that surplus extraction is no longer carried out through direct coercion translates into a de-territorialisation of the process of international capital accumulation as an increase in income is no longer contingent upon territorial accumulation. According to Justin Rosenberg, it was this transition from premodern 'imperial'/'feudal' socio-economic relations to modern capitalist international relations that institutionalized the functional similarity, or billiard-ball character, of internally hierarchically organized modern states whose external interactions naturally re-produce the balance of power under the conditions of anarchy structural Realism describes (Rosenberg 1994: Ch. 5). Rosenberg's work intervenes, therefore, directly into the inter-paradigm debate in IR by arguing that rather than being mutually opposing international theories, Liberalism and Realism represent two sides of the Janus-faced nature of modern, capitalist international relations.

Benno Teschke's critical reconstruction of the emergence of the Westphalian system of states in his *Myth of 1648* builds on Rosenberg's work but also takes issue with Rosenberg's structuralist reading of the 'separation-argument', by following more closely Brenner's theory of social property relations. On this basis, he also problematises the historical relation between the rise of capitalism and the inter-state system in so far as the latter cannot be derived from the former. Based on Brenner's insight into the political nature of accumulation in pre-capitalist societies, Teschke transferred this notion to pre-capitalist geopolitics which were characterized by competitive forms of *geo-political* accumulation, i.e. pre-capitalist conflicts over territorially constituted sources of revenue (Teschke 2003: 61, 220; Teschke 2006: 536). Hence, pre-capitalist IR is characterized by constant inter-feudal warfare – a dynamic that led over time through processes of political and geopolitical accumulation towards an inter-state order in pre-capitalist Europe. Teschke's account denaturalizes the notion of modern sovereignty and territoriality and argues that it was only during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, rather than with the Peace Treaties of Westphalia in 1648 - the era of absolutist 'territorialisation' of rule - that the European inter-state system was gradually transformed through the agency of capitalist Britain towards a capitalist inter-state order. Continental Absolutism consequently reformulated the personal relationships and dependencies of feudalism on the level of a centralized state through office venality without fundamentally altering the conditions of personalized politics and property. Strategies of social reproduction, therefore, continued to be politically constituted. As a result, Old

Regime geopolitics continued to be dominated by competing forms of geopolitical accumulation in the form of inter-dynastic rivalries. The geopolitically superior challenger emanating from the English heartland of capitalism forced the social transformation of backward societies, which leads to a gradual, incomplete and contradictory process of social and political transformation on the Continent. As opposed to Rosenberg, Teschke emphasizes the processual and incomplete character of the feudalist/absolutist transitions, the centrality of class struggles and geopolitical conflicts and the specific nature of these transitions embedded within various 'special paths':

“But in one way or another, on pain of extinction, pre-capitalist states had to accommodate, assimilate, or adjust - or invent radical counterstrategies, most notably socialism. These variations in state responses express the explosive confluence of the different timing of competitive exposure to Britain and other advanced capitalist states and pre-existing domestic class constellations that ruled out certain state strategies while ruling in others. While the initial impetus towards state modernization and capitalist transformation was geopolitical, state responses to this pressure were refracted through respective class relations in national contexts, including class resistance. In this sense, the 'alignment of the provinces' generated nothing but national *Sonderwege* (special paths)” (Teschke 2003: 265f).

The territorial fragmentation through which capitalism developed, i.e. the inter-state system, is therefore not an outcome of capitalism, but an absolutist legacy, which causes the subsequent unevenness of capitalist development and the variety of outcomes. Hannes Lacher's work, on the other hand, has mobilized similar findings to provide new perspectives on debates about Globalization and territoriality (Lacher 2003, 2006b), which aim at circumventing the divide between sceptics (Veseth 1998; Rosenberg 2000) and (hyper)globalists (Scholte 2000) by emphasizing that the geopolitical pluriverse, i.e. multiple state forms, are a historical heritage of inter-dynastic rivalries based on the previously dominant forms of social reproduction, i.e. geopolitical accumulation (Teschke and Lacher 2007). Thus, the political economy of globalization and the geopolitical dynamics inherent in the territorial nation-state system (Lacher 2005) are not competing or chronological forms of development, but were always at the core of modern international relations. Lacher sets out the problem of a spatial 'logic' of early capitalism. If capitalism is a totalizing drive which engenders a political infrastructure suited for the regulatory needs of a globalizing capitalist economy, what could be expected *logically* would be the enlargement and fusion of territorial rule for the purpose of easing trade. However, what was observable *historically* within the Ottoman (as well as the Habsburg) Empire was a

further fragmentation of political rule simultaneously adjoined with a quantitative growth in transnational exchange relations. The problem is that “if the relations of exploitation under capitalism are inherently global(izing), then why are the capitalist relations of domination not corresponding to their spatial extension, to the capitalist world market and global social relations?” (Lacher 2000: 51). Thus, Political Marxism also directly explains and problematizes the important problem of the persistence of politico-territorial differentiation within the totalizing tendencies of capitalist modernity by revealing the Absolutist origins of the territorially divided inter-national order.

### *The Fragmentation of Rule and Capitalist Modernity*

This wider problem can be reformulated for the purpose of the current project. Imperial disintegration and post-Ottoman nation-state formation is understood as part of this transformation from premodern to modern sovereignty. And “one aspect of this transformation was the tendency for the borders of the state and the boundaries of nations to become more congruent, whether through movements of national secession or unification” (Lacher 2006a: 131). With regard to the Ottoman Empire, this transformation thus implied a shift from the fused political and economic power of the Sultan to a separation of the two and the depersonalization of political rule in the modern national state. Once political affairs are de-personalized, “the individual (...), with the help of self-discovered, self-imposed norms, determines himself as a free and moral-being” (Kedourie 1993: 17). The process of de-personalizing social relations and political rule in modern societies therefore triggers a process of alienation within the modern political subject which can only be overcome by supporting the latter with a framework of reference capable of establishing reality and, consequently, social cohesion within the modern nation. National secession is therefore understood as being congruent with the nascent moment of an abstract, de-personalized state, the separation of the private from the public and the economic from the political: in short *modern* sovereignty.

Why, then we can then ask, does southeastern Europe see the disappearance of a polity comprising a large internal market which had initiated a process of political modernization and partly established a depersonalized Weberian bureaucracy? This conundrum is primarily (if not only) a problem for Marxist IR Theory, because if the bourgeoisie ‘creates a world after its own image’, why do the

transnational market and the national state not follow the same totalizing logic inherent in global capital? As the following historical re-construction of Ottoman decline demonstrates, territorial fragmentation was not a world after the bourgeoisie's image, because the social classes that did fit this Marxist ideal-type most closely were either absent or opposed to the nationalist projects. The absence of a capitalist/nationalist agency, however, does not mean that capitalism was not created 'from above' by a state-class, after independent states had been created, because, as Ellen Wood put it, "capitalism, in some ways more than any other social form, needs politically organized and legally defined stability, regularity, and predictability" (Wood, E. M. 2002: 178). And those 'goods' are normally still provided for by the modern nation-state. It does not, however, provide at the same time any answers as to why the geopolitical layout of the Balkans became fractured, and why these revolutions from above were successful only when carried out by multiple, nationally differentiated state classes instead of the technologically, institutionally and arguably intellectually more advanced, Ottoman one.

#### *Nationalism and Social Property Relations*

One answer to this question could be found in the concept of nationalism. Nation-state consolidation or national secessions are usually associated with the spread of capitalist modernity. Ellen Wood had originally explained Nationalism as an uneven, rather than modern social phenomenon, emerging from class and institutional contradictions within the absolutist state (Wood 1991: 25–38). What is problematic, however, is not only the equation of absolutist with modern sovereignty that had substantiated the 'Myth' of 1648, but also the equation of 'national' with 'modernized' rule. Frederick Dufour has recently elaborated on this problem, contending that the origin of nationalism is to be found in the "combined transformation of social-property regimes in England and France" (Dufour 2007: 588), thus emphasising the inter-national origin of nationalism beyond the internal contradictions outlined by Wood. Thus, for Dufour the capitalist landed aristocracy gave a *national* form to its social interests (Dufour 2007: 594) under the impression of inter-national imperatives for transformation, transforming political subjectivity without social change. This matches Benno Teschke and Hannes Lacher's argument about the pre-capitalist origin of multiple states. However, while this problematizes the important transition towards the national character of post-Absolutist rule, it still does not provide a dedicated account of the problem of national/territorial

differentiation and secession. These are not recognized as an integral part of the problem of capitalist transformation. What Political Marxist literature has not yet developed, therefore, is a specific answer to the question about the origins of processes of *national differentiation* beyond the transition from absolutist to national rule.

*Excursus: Multiple Modernities*<sup>14</sup>

At this point it appears pertinent to distinguish between various forms of modernity and their respective social origins. By pointing out the distinction between territorial, absolutist, national and, lastly, modern capitalist sovereignty, Teschke, Lacher and Dufour have already elucidated the need to dismantle a holistic form of modernity that understands the transformation as a sharp historical sequence, driven by an underlying teleology, where the same modernizing logic transforms a variety of phenomena into a new social whole. The historical reconstruction presented here equally aims at disentangling various notions of modernity. This not only concerns the difference between “the Enlightenment project and the ideology of capitalism” (Wood 2000: 426), but also between capitalist, territorial and national sovereignty, or the social, spatial and epistemic dimensions of modernity.

*Capitalist sovereignty* is understood here in Political Marxist terms as the depersonalization of rule, involving the separation of the private from the public and the economic from the political. It pertains to the system of social reproduction as well as to the nature of sovereignty. Secondly, *territoriality*, i.e. the unique form of exclusive territorial control between physically and cartographically manifested frontiers, pre-supposes the establishment of a monopoly over the means of violence. However, it does not presuppose either the national character of rule, or depersonalized social relations and the creation of an abstract political authority. Thus, as Teschke and Lacher have pointed out, the sharper delimitation of the ‘outside’ from the ‘inside’ in Absolutism, does not necessarily signify a deeper social transformation. Crucially, however, monopolizing the means of violence and the

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<sup>14</sup> Shumel N. Eisenstadt has developed the idea of ‘Multiple Modernities’, as “the best way to understand the contemporary world – indeed to explain the history of modernity – (...) as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs (...) carried forward by specific social actors in close connection with social, political, and intellectual activists and also by social movements pursuing different programs of modernity, holding very different views on what makes societies modern” (Eisenstadt 2000: 2). While this thesis finds itself broadly in agreement with this statement, the notion of ‘Multiple Modernity’ itself is used differently here as the need to disaggregate, not only the culturally and geographically differentiated amalgamations of ‘modernity’, but also the different properties of social order conventionally associated with the notion of ‘modern sovereignty’.

transition towards a standing army creates new forms of external violence and warfare. Lastly, *national sovereignty*, which has its origin in the Enlightenment, is conducive to the creation of the modern political subject as it supplies a form of depersonalized political ideology that replaces personal relations of domination. Nationalism, therefore, appears to be coeval with the establishment of capitalist sovereignty. However, as the highly diversified socio-historical origins of nationalist movements suggest, the institutional form of capitalist sovereignty and its national content have to be separated. In other words, a holistic notion of modernity does not explain the *multiplicity* and differentiation of national forms. While national cohesion fulfils certain social functions for creating the modern political subject within the abstract territorial state, *national divisions* do not. Rather, processes of nation- and state formation are best understood as compatible in long-term outcomes but disjointed in social origins.

Thus, even though all three forms of modernity are compatible with each other and while they all transiently converge, not in a determinate, but in a semi-contingent way towards a homogenous holistic capitalist, territorial and national form of sovereignty, their origins are nevertheless socially differentiated and need to be conceptually differentiated as well. The fact of their historical convergence does not allow for a converse teleological argument about their abstract or logical inter-relation. Put differently, the three different expressions of modernity discussed here; social, spatial, epistemic - are all politically constituted and are not reducible to one another. They have to be seen as originating within the context of various specific social struggles that overlapped and inter-related, but cannot be subsumed a priori under a meta-narrative of modernization.

#### *The Contribution of Political Marxism*

In summary, it can be argued that Political Marxism is best understood as a response to the problem of international determinism. Instead of understanding pre-capitalist social forms only in relation to a totalizing capitalist developmental rationale, Political Marxism aims at overcoming teleology and determinism by recognizing the transformative role inherent in the nexus between specific forms of social reproduction and the associated social struggles within historically grown, unique social contexts. This generic emphasis on the potential for transformation through social struggles and shifting social property regimes means that Political Marxism's explanatory scope goes beyond explaining social and institutional changes that are



associated with the transition from pre-capitalist to capitalist social relations as well. Hence, Political Marxism claims that these elements constitute transhistorical aspects of human interaction which apply to capitalist as well as pre-capitalist social forms alike. Taking these elements as the starting point for a historical materialist theorization of IR avoids the reproduction of teleological and unidirectional narratives of modernization. Political Marxism, thus, retrieves, theoretically, the irreducible agency of social forces that translate into specific historical analyses that avoid structural, deterministic as well as pluralistic or contingent explanations. Locally specific outcomes are no longer either reduced to structural imperatives or left to pluralistic explanatory arbitrariness. Thus, instead of ascribing a reproductive, totalizing capacity to European modernity, Political Marxism re-conceptualises these transformations as *sui generis* outcomes of socio-political conflicts situated within wider social transformations that are interconnected through the prism of international relations.

This requires an ontological clarification about the realm of ‘the international’. On the one hand, the central theoretical premise of Political Marxism is the importance of social struggles and situated historical developments, as opposed to abstract logics and semi-scientific models. On the other hand, these struggles operate within the central transhistorical ontology of societal differentiation, which itself necessitates the clarification of the notion of the social, the inter-societal as well as the various processes of interaction if it wants to avoid a proto-realist reification of geopolitical competition. Two answers to this problem are available. Either the understanding of the inter-societal realm is specific and can only be established through a careful historicisation of its social constitution and the associated dynamics. This understanding rules out structural or systemic transhistorical regularities that could be abstractly theorized. Alternatively, a theory of the international could be developed that is capable of reformulating the dialectic between historically mutating social forms, their differentiation and the inter-societal sphere their interaction generates.

### **1.9 The Expansion of Capitalism: Uneven and Combined Development**

The Theory of Uneven and Combined Development (U&CD) constitutes an attempt to provide just such a theory in abstract and transhistorical terms. Initially, however, this approach emerged from the historicisation of capitalist expansion. Justin

Rosenberg revived Leon Trotsky's notion of historically uneven and socially combined development as a means of conceptualizing the various and fractured transitions towards modernity.<sup>15</sup> Initially it was Isaac Deutscher who recovered Trotsky's premise that capitalism spreads in an uneven fashion and combines with local social structures which produces different forms of capitalist systems and political outcomes. Capitalism's spread is, thus, not so much mediated through the expansion of markets and bourgeois agents, but by backward states' responses to the geopolitical pressures generated by the fiscally and militarily superior capitalist state-society complexes, first and foremost Britain. This process creates a globally unified market place within a nationally diversified geopolitical system. The Russian example is used as the textbook-case to validate this theory: "Forced to advance under superior economic and military pressure from the West, she [Russia] could not go through all the phases of the 'classical' cycle of western European progress" (Deutscher 1963). Thus, the source of social change lies not so much within the social formations themselves, but "in the generic conditions of their coexistence", or the intra-societal realm of world politics. As Rosenberg put it

"Instead of the homogeneous 'world after its own image' (Marx 1973:71) projected in the *Communist Manifesto*, this process was actually proliferating a multiplicity of unique patterns of 'combined development', whose political instability and international connectedness fundamentally altered the social and geographical co-ordinates of revolutionary crisis and opportunity"(Rosenberg 2006: 3).

Thus, rather than putting the emphasis on the development of a capitalist, market-based economy and the emergence of a politically powerful bourgeoisie as the agents of social change, as in World Systems Theory, agency is usually located within a conservative state-building elite whose primary concern is indeed not social change, but rather how to prevent or channel it from above in the light of international competitiveness. Thus, it is first and foremost the concerns for international survival that determined the Ottoman's specific "historical and geographical location within social structures of humanity" (Rosenberg 1996: 8). Capitalist expansion and social change in general is, therefore, not seen as an economic process but rather as a political and geopolitical process, "in which pre-capitalist state classes had to design counterstrategies of reproduction to defend their position in an international

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<sup>15</sup> Initially Justin Rosenberg elaborated this theory as a way to understand the expansion of capitalism his Isaac Deutscher Memorial lecture (Rosenberg 1996); recently a variety of Marxist IR scholars have broadly identified with this theory, e.g. Dunn and Radice (2006); for the latest developments on the treatment of uneven and combined development as 'general abstraction' see (Rosenberg 2006; Matin 2007; Callinicos and Rosenberg 2008; Rosenberg 2009)

environment which put them at an economic and coercive disadvantage” (Teschke 2003: 265). These state-classes had to adapt to the system by reinventing it anew for themselves. As a result, capitalist expansion creates a succession of special paths,<sup>16</sup> i.e. highly differentiated political adaptations of the same supposedly superior Western institutions. Thus, in having to adapt to the new international system, backward states, like the Ottoman Empire, were left no choice but a “pre-emptive state formation in a pro-Western fashion” (Bromley 1994: 104). The Porte and other ‘backward’ social formations, such as Russia, were “neither an uncaptalist, nor a capitalist state” (Rosenberg 1996: 8). Transformation takes place ‘from above’, i.e. is leaped over, or as Robbie Shilliam argued with regards to the Bolshevik Revolution, is ‘substituted for a missing universalistic sociality’ (Shilliam 2004: 67). This is not to say, however, that the Ottoman Reform Movement had similar social origins, or that it was similar in nature to the Bolshevik Revolution, but simply that it followed similar incentives.

#### *Uneven and Combined Development as International Historical Sociology?*

Starting from this history of capitalist expansion, Justin Rosenberg has recently developed a broader, further reaching application of this theory. The central *abstract* problem, which uneven and combined development is trying to overcome, is the division between classic sociological and contemporary international theory and the problematic conceptualizations of the international these two strands develop. His critique of social theory, international theory and the Historical Sociology of International Relations, thus, claims that all of these previous approaches have failed to ontologically incorporate the international as a constitutive element of social ‘internal’ transformation. While social theory understands the international as “a contingent element, an appendage to *internalist* sociological modes of explanation” (Matin 2007: 420), theories of the international have reified proto-Realist assumptions about an essentialized, autonomous prior sphere of geopolitical interaction that is abstracted from its constitutive parts and therefore theoretically external to social theory. This leaves the international “powerfully acknowledged, but analytically unpenetrated” (Rosenberg 2006: 310).

The way in which the theory of uneven and combined development proposes to overcome this problem can be summarized as follows: Sociology is always

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<sup>16</sup> The idea of the ‘Special Path’ or ‘*Sonderweg*’ has its historiographic origin in Hans-Ulrich Wehler’s analysis of the Prusso-German state formation in 1871 (Wehler 2003).

international sociology, which means that Social Theory is always and necessarily also international theory. Why is this so? At the highest level of abstraction, the problem occurs because the established ontological and methodological confines between 'social' and 'international' fail to apprehend the true, uneven and combined, nature of social development. Due to differentiated bases of subsistence and the different ways of engaging with nature for the purpose of subsistence, development is always fractured and uneven. Since development is divided into multiple paths, or in other words multilinear, it is also always interactive. Unevenness implies a multiplicity of societies, which entails an anarchic realm of interaction. It is, therefore, due to the multilinearity of societal development that societies influence one another; hence development is not only uneven and multilinear, but also, inevitably, combined. Hence, societies influence one another in their developmental trajectories through various forms of interaction.

However, they do not only do so on a bilateral basis, but also on a wider, systemic level, where the sum of their interaction constitutes a new sphere of social reality that is neither entirely abstracted from the social actors that it is constituted by, nor reducible to the sum of their intentions. Hence, the "interactive multiplicity of social development" (Rosenberg 2006: 312), even though it is comprised of differentiated social formations, takes on a life of its own, whereby it is neither just extrapolated from domestic factors, nor prior to them. Rather, it becomes, through a series of knock-on effects "an uneven causal 'pattern' without a visual centre" (Rosenberg 2006: 322). What is proposed, therefore, is a "quilted, serial, decentred" (Rosenberg 2006: 323) notion of the international, the ontology of which is sociological as well as systemic.

This new inter-societal 'life of its own', in consequence, impacts back onto 'internal' social development through interaction. The international is not merely in-between or above societies as a systemic imperative, "but rather in a dimension of their being which cuts across both of these 'places' and reaches simultaneously into the 'domestic' constitution of those societies themselves." (Rosenberg 2006: 327). Thus, it is here that the crucial process of 'combination' of the social and inter-societal spheres of social activity takes place leading to the amalgamation of two spheres of causality, social and international, which should never have been separated in the first place. Put succinctly, "[t]he unevenness of development (...), entails multiplicity; and this multiplicity, we have added, is everywhere expressed in a condition of inter-societal coexistence which gives rise to diplomacy" (Rosenberg

2006: 320) and other forms of international life. In consequence, the problematique of the unhelpful conceptual, methodological and disciplinary divisions between International Relations and Social Theory is resolved.

#### *The Contribution of Uneven and Combined Development*

One of the questions that arise from an adaptation specifically of Trotsky's theory is its universal applicability. The Theory of Uneven and Combined Development was developed in the light of the Russian example of adapting to unevenly expanding capitalist social relations. Hence, the initial suspicion would always be that it also only pertains to explaining processes of uneven and combined – capitalist – development, i.e. the relations between capitalist and pre-capitalist societies. In fact, Rosenberg himself appears to suggest as much in 2005: "Conjunctures of capitalist world development must thus be theorized as conjunctures of this historical-international process of 'uneven and combined development (Rosenberg 2005: 41)."

On the other hand, only because a theory has been developed within a specific context, does not rule out its universal applicability per se. Justin Rosenberg and Kamran Matin's efforts (Matin 2007) at applying uneven and combined development to pre-capitalist eras and to thereby discover 'universal laws' of human coexistence are extensive and include solid, theoretically sound reconstructions of pre-capitalist social transformations. However, despite these convincing efforts, a closer look at the central concepts of the social and the international raises difficult questions about a tranhistorical reading of Trotsky's theory (cf. Davidson 2009).

#### *Problematizing the Social*

The concept of consolidated, territorially delineated polities or societies is specific to the modern containerization of social relations. Uneven and Combined Development builds on a critique of this 'territorial trap' in IR (Agnew 1994). To this end, an essentialized inside/outside distinction is replaced by a sociological one. However, even though this is theoretically illuminating and entails a more credible claim to universal applicability than Realism's essentialism, it leaves the problem of assumed social boundedness intact. If unevenness of development creates social differentiation, which in turn creates a sphere of inter-societal, as opposed to 'internal' social activity, this still assumes the boundedness, or rather the clear delineation, territorial or otherwise, of the social. As the following will show, historically specific forms of social order generate different forms of social

interaction as well as different understandings of the perceived ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, usually not clearly distinguishable from one another. Arguably, the notion of a clear and unambiguous inside/outside delineation hinges upon the emergence of collective, homogenized identities within the modern nation-state generating ‘selfs’, ‘others’ and, by extension, an unambiguously definable realm of inter-action. This is not to argue, however, that geopolitics is in general historically unique to this form of social order, but rather that the realm of geopolitics is constituted by different actors and forms of interaction at specific historical conjunctures. These unique relations cannot be appropriated by identical and transhistorical ontologies and associated epistemologies developed by modern International Relations theory. Without engaging in semantic pedantry, it can be argued that employing the ‘inter-national’ as an unambiguously defined ontology is best restricted to understanding the historically unique relationship between the contemporary forms of social cohabitation, i.e. national, territorial states. Equally, if ‘unevenness’ is the differentiating criterion for all historical and regional forms of social life, this begs questions of the pre-modern, extra-European historiographic identification of unevenness. While it is widely accepted that ‘society’ or ‘polity’ are highly contested notions (Ferguson, Mansbach et al. 2000), the same can be said about the concrete historical expression of developmental differentiation and unevenness.

### *Problematizing the International*

Societal differentiation constitutes the international, not as a historically specific quantity but as a logical part of human development. Thus, the international is not a historical form, but as foundational an ontology as the concept of society itself. Thus the case can indeed be made for a transhistorical notion of the international. However, even if the abstraction of the international as a transhistorical category is left untouched, the question of social boundedness still has an immediate effect on the differentiation between the social and the inter-societal realm. Even a sociological construction of two separate spheres of interaction, still assumes the clear delineation of two social spheres. However, in the absence of a clear definition of the social and overlapping social loyalties, the question can be raised as to whether this “coexistence of developmentally differentiated but reproductively similar (non-capitalist) societies” (Matin 2007: 429) means that they are necessarily mutually exclusive.

Apart from the ‘social’, the differing forms of interaction require some elaboration. What kind of interaction can be logically assumed if merely based on the

fact of societal multiplicity? Why and how does coexistence lead to interaction? Are the inter-societal 'encounters' discursive, violent or otherwise? Is interaction always competitive based on the assumed scarcity of exploitable resources? Alternatively, are they best understood as acts of collective self-definition, social engineering or an expression of a collective 'will-to-power'? The question is whether the variety of possible interactions can be abstracted at all or whether the only way of understanding interaction is indeed historically specific. Linked to the problem of interaction are the various forms of 'combination'. For it is in this process of combination that social change is located. Due to the centrality of this historical juncture, some elaboration on this crucial moment not only in pre-capitalist contexts is of interest.

By extension, one can finally ask what the nature of 'the international', if understood as a "causal pattern without a visual centre," really is. On an empirical level, interaction takes on many forms. Neo-Weberian Historical Sociology and World Systems Theory tend to privilege one form of interaction over another. Uneven and Combined Development, on the other hand, proposes a more abstract notion of the international. It is this generalization that allows for a more universal applicability of its central claims. However, it leaves questions about the generative nature of interaction, namely the transformative moments of 'combination' to the concrete historical analysis. It is specifically the lack of a reflection on power and social struggles within processes of combination, but also the concrete nature of 'interaction', most notably the role of violence and war, that leaves some open questions in this regard. The formulation of the theory of uneven and combined development at the highest level of abstraction not only tends to reify and transhistoricise the notion of 'the international', it provides little guidance as to how to turn these abstractions into more concrete determinants for explanation.

#### *Historical Specificity or Universal Laws?*

Trotsky's formula, while claiming universality, was not developed in the abstract. The realization of a necessity of interaction and combination, which then causes change, was based on the concrete observation of how specific interactions had initiated unique processes of combination and, by extension, transformation as result of *capitalist expansion*. Trotsky claimed that 'unevenness of development' was the "most general law of the historic process [which] revealed itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries (...) under the whip of external

necessity” (Trotsky 1964: 85). This does not conclusively answer the question, however, whether his observations of the historically peculiar trajectory unfolding in front of his eyes reveal a more transhistorical law of human development, based on more abstract notions of society, the international, unevenness, interaction and development. Do pre-capitalist forms of coexistence lead to interaction, combination and change? More fundamentally, how can one locate ‘unevenness of development’ as the most crucial form of differentiation within pre-capitalist social relations? Given the socio-historical origins of Trotsky’s theory, its transversal application is an ambitious, if not necessarily impossible, project. Whether it serves the purpose of explaining the emergence of a post-Ottoman international system in southeastern Europe will be investigated in the following historical reconstruction.

#### **1.10 Political Marxism, Collective Identities and Nationalism**

Starting with diversity, rather than trying to submerge its explanation under a totalizing narrative of capitalism or imperialism, and by deciphering the dialectical relationship between this expansion and a variety of responses, Political Marxism provides, to speak with Simon Bromley a useful “empirically open Historical Materialism [which] is perfectly capable of [also] generating a theory of the state” (Bromley 1994: 188). However, the origins of differentiation and coexistence remain pertinent questions also for Political Marxism, not least since capitalist modernity itself cannot explain differentiation. In the light of the extremely variable historical expressions of difference, it remains difficult to develop abstract theories about it. Historicising this particularization as a pre-modern legacy, sufficiently consolidated by ‘enlightened’ Absolutists rulers which “capitalism can leave (...) intact” (Teschke 2003: 267) only partly captures the problem. To be sure, this is a legitimate suggestion to the degree that capitalism within its own logic does not require a re-configuration of political space. However, it does not apply to societies outside of the European core of dynastic inter-state relations. ‘National’ culture enters the equation only as a result of modernisation, i.e. as something that is ‘purified’ by a homogenising state apparatus after territorial fragmentation has already occurred. This cannot explain, however, the spatial transformations towards a ‘national’ space that have occurred outside of this dynastic core of states and before any noticeable transition into capitalist modernity.



In the concrete case of the Ottoman Empire, the problem therefore remains, that all the noteworthy reform efforts culminating in the *Tanzimat* period are perfectly explicable within the remit of Political Marxism and uneven and combined development as an effort to ‘catch up’. However, the reaction to the centralization effort, in the form of nationalist secessionist movements, which, rather than emulating Westernization, at least initially oppose it, is a quandary that neither of these theorize recognize as a specific problem. Put differently, if a capitalist international system leaves borders intact and territorial fragmentation is simply a historical legacy, why does it take on a *national* character, that in some parts, like the Ottoman Empire, alters the territorial layouts and consequent geopolitical relations significantly?

The real issue lies, therefore, not only with introducing ‘the international’ as a ‘constitutive element’ into our analysis. This should usefully be a second step. However, it *cannot be but a second step*. The international requires a careful definition based on a notion of the social. Thus, it is initially important to establish what is meant by differentiated ‘modes’ of social interaction in the first place. What is required, therefore, is a theory of what constitutes a pre-capitalist social formation. This in turn could be based on a more distinctive reflection on the origins of collective identities, which is only very incompletely captured by theories of nationalism. In this context, the formative role of modern forms of mass violence and total war merits consideration as well. Theories of nationalism and International Relations have dealt with forms of building collective identities through violent conflict (Van Evera 1994; Conversi 1999), although they have mostly assumed a conscious engineering of identities through violence. What is proposed here instead is the possibility of an unconscious and unintentional process of nation-formation out of modern mass conflicts. The initial differentiation and later territorial amalgamation of communities that had previously shared a social and physical space peacefully, is not always and necessarily the outcome of politically directed projects, but could be the unintended consequence of a violent conflict that has its origins elsewhere. The radicalization of identities and societies can therefore be understood as the result of geopolitical contestations with distinct social origins. This is not to say that Political Marxism cannot accommodate theories of collective identity formation and the effects of mass violence. It is to say, however, that it is pertinent to avoid either relegating difference to a superstructural expression of an economic or bureaucratic transformation, a mere historical legacy, or employing a cultural essentialism which

accepts as given 'the nation' as a timeless social reality with no origin or need for explanation.

### **1.11 Structure of the Argument**

This chapter has set out the context of International Relations Theories within which the historical sociological reconstruction of Ottoman disintegration will be undertaken. Contrasting Constructivism, Neo-Weberian, World Systems and Political Marxist approaches, it was argued that while Political Marxism offers the most promising potential for a successful theorization of Ottoman disintegration, it has to be extended and refined so as to problematize the notion of difference, nationalism and the effects of mass violence.

Consequently, chapter two will discuss the social and political phenomenon of nationalism. Various theories on the subject, which conventionally understand the phenomenon of nationalism as coeval with the emergence of a holistic set of modern social relations in Western Europe will be examined. This theoretical discussion will reveal, on the one hand, the paradoxical nature of the phenomenon of nationalism itself. Rather than embodying the political ideology of the Enlightenment, nationalism has come to represent a backward, exclusive form of social organization, more closely related to German Romanticism than the French Enlightenment. The cause for this reformulation of nationalist thought, it will be argued, lies in the intensified continental wars, especially the Napoleonic expansions. This, in turn allows for a critical reflection on the theories of nationalism which have, thus far, only insufficiently acknowledged the problem of international relations and geopolitics. This also implies that nationalism does not represent an autonomous social dynamic. Theories of nationalism therefore confuse modernization and differentiation of rule. Instead of juxtaposing dynasticism and nationalism as two historical sequences, this thesis will argue, with reference to historical evidence, that the further spatial re-definition of political rule on the basis of so-called 'nationalities' had their origin in a variety of specific pre-capitalist social conflicts, rather than modern Enlightened principles like popular sovereignty.

Chapter three will start the historical reconstruction and focus on the emergence of regional power centres in a state which is usually characterized as

highly centralized. First the Ottoman historiographic context will be elaborated, which is dominated by organicist theories of imperial decline on the one hand and methodological nationalism on the other. The historicisation of the original provincial order from the moment of territorial stagnation will briefly be outlined, its mode of reproduction contextualized, before illuminating the process of ‘externally’ conditioned ‘internal’ social change. These changes led to the emergence of a quasi-aristocratic landed regime in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which entered into a protracted conflict with the Sultanate over its attempts to centralize and fiscally consolidate the state, establishing the central centre-periphery dynamic which eventually led to a protracted series of internal and external crises.

A dedicated historical account of the Greek secession will be presented in Chapter four. A critical review of conventional narratives of the ‘Greek War of Independence’ which is usually understood as the liberation from an Ottoman Yoke will introduce this chapter. The historical reconstruction will initially focus on the social origins of the Greek struggle. This will disclose that while a Greek Nationalist movement existed in the form of a secret society in Odessa, the existence of this movement *per se* is insufficient to explain the secessionist dynamic. It will be revealed that the origin of the secessions is not nationalism, but the effects of the social conflicts outlined in chapter three. The post-Ottoman development of Greek sovereignty will illustrate, furthermore, that secession as a concept needs to be dissected from social change and Revolution.

Chapters five and six will problematize the notion of the international and steady forms of inter-societal interaction from two different perspectives. Two case studies will show that any assumptions about stable, long-term international ‘logics’ as explanatory devices are problematic. Chapter five will elaborate on the international environment within which the Greek Revolt took place in order to discern the influence of the international as a constitutive element to this history of state formation. On the one hand, this will show that Greek autonomy only came about due to external intervention, rather than autonomous Greek military strength. On the level of the international itself, this historical reconstruction will demonstrate that, despite liberal institutional arguments to the contrary, the international system of the post-Napoleonic Vienna concert was in fact unpredictable and difficult to conceptualize within International Relations. Namely, while the conservative spirit of

1815 would have contradicted the intervention in the Greek Revolt, the eventual military involvement of Western Powers was motivated by Balance of Power thinking and the expectation of sustained Russian expansionism in the Balkans.

Chapter six will consider the wider relations between 'Europe' as a whole and the Ottoman Empire. At the centre of this chapter lies the claim that these relations have been shaped by a long standing Orientalist tradition which was fuelled, according to Edward Said and others, by the social conditions of European modernity itself. However, as will be argued here, rather than being an outcome of the 'ego-anxiety' that modern de-personalised social relations have generated, this 'tradition' is grounded on geopolitical encounters between various European Powers and the Porte that were aggravated by neo-absolutist strategies or power. This shift is reflected in a change of the vocabulary describing the Ottoman Empire from 'tyranny' to 'despotism'. It will be argued in consequence, that, instead of one overarching Orientalist rationale, various European societies have in fact many applied many Orientalisms. This implies that there are also many 'Orientals' apart from the Ottoman Empire. Orientalist representations and distortions nevertheless survived into the contemporary world and compromise *Realpolitik* in European-Turkish relations. This further substantiates the need to historicise geopolitical relations according to specific circumstances, instead of the futile quest for an abstract, ahistorical 'logic'.

Chapter seven will summarize the historical and theoretical findings of this thesis. Historically, the reconstruction of Ottoman decline will show that fragmentation of political rule cannot be understood as an outcome of an international modernist 'logic'. It will be established that the historical/social manifestation of the post-Ottoman national polities as well as their national character are the result of essentially pre-modern and pre-capitalist social struggles and cannot be understood as a direct or functional derivative of geopolitical or capitalist totalizing 'logics' universalizing the European inter-state system on the Balkans.

These findings will demonstrate the uncompromised requirement to not only historicise social transformations, but also the international itself. While this is not to argue that interaction does not generate stable channels of communication and common law between states like the diplomacy that surrounded the Greek Revolt, this cannot amount to an explanation of all forms of inter-state relations, conflict and

cooperation alike. The very definition of the international, based the emergence and disappearance of its constitutive parts, societies, as well as the radically shifting dynamics between them, hinges upon the concrete historicisation, which arguably renders any attempt for theoretical abstraction from these constantly mutating relations problematic. On the theoretical level, this will show that Constructivism, Neo-Weberian Historical Sociology, World Systems Theory and Uneven and Combined Development can all contribute to this new understanding of Ottoman imperial decline. However, none of these theories is successful in comprehensively theorizing the events surrounding this process. While Political Marxism has its own limitations with regards to nationalism and violence, it is still endorsed as the most promising way of understanding the social and historical evolution of the Eastern Question.

## 2 Nationalism and Geopolitics

### International Relations and the Formation of Nations

*“The savage who loves himself, his wife and child, with quiet joy, and in his modest way works for the good of his tribe, as for his own life, is, in my opinion, a truer being than that shadow of a man, the refined citizen of the world, who, enraptured with the love of all his fellow-shadows, loves but a chimera”.*

*Herder (1969: 306)*

#### 2.1 Introduction

The 'historical turn' in non-orthodox IR has considerably improved our understanding of a) the wide historical variations in the nature of political communities that constitute geopolitical orders, and b) the specificity of the notion of 'modern sovereignty' and the historical construction of the 'modern inter-state system'. In the process, non-realist approaches have largely abandoned the exclusive focus on the political and geo-political level of explanation by retrieving and re-incorporating the socio-economic and ideational dynamics, as well as the actors involved in these historical constructions. However, this chapter argues that these approaches are incomplete in at least three key respects.

First, there is a strong 'euro-centric' bias in most of these accounts, raising the question as to what degree the 'European experience', itself internally differentiated due to spatio-temporal divergences in regional trajectories of state-formations, can be mobilised for understanding the specific dynamics of 'non-European' developments. Geographically, the emergence of modern sovereignty and the ensuing new international order has concentrated on its historical place of origin, i.e. Western Europe. The question as to how this order was universalized and spread beyond this locus of origin does not lend itself easily to generalisations of the kind frequently employed by the most prominent strands in the historical sociology of International Relations whose explanations tend to rely on a self-imposing capacity of the modern European international system.

Second, relatively little attention has been paid to the problem as to how the 'national' character of the 'modern' or capitalist form of sovereignty is universalized – implying that modern sovereignty emerges simply when “the political and the national unit are congruent” (Gellner 1983: 1). As extant 'euro-centric' IR approaches tend to neglect the dimension of 'nationalism-formation' within their wider accounts of state- and inter-state formations, this chapter will re-examine the

role of nationalism-formation in relation to the Ottoman case by reviewing the extant literature on modern nationalism. This literature will include both wider sociological approaches as well as IR theories that deal with this problem. Notably, little attention has been paid to the division of nationalism into a 'French' cosmopolitan and a 'German' communitarian tradition. The chapter argues that the import of an undifferentiated and unitary/generic concept of European nationalism in both literatures into debates on the Ottoman case disables the explanatory usefulness of both approaches - IR theories of nationalism and sociological theories of nationalism - and obscures the specificity of the role of nationalism-formation in the narrative of the decline of the Ottoman Empire.

Third, this tendency is aggravated by a generic portrayal in these literatures of 'nationalism' as one essential component of a much wider master-concept - modernity. Conventionally it is argued that "in order to become truly modern, [the Ottoman Empire] was perceived to having to transform necessarily into a nation-state, or rather a variety of nation-states" (Abou-El-Haj 2005: 62). Hence, the emergence of nationalism is (mis)understood to embody the spread of Enlightenment ideology in the region. However, this kind of argument struggles to explain the specific kind of nationalism that came to bear in the post-Ottoman context. Paradoxically, as was the case elsewhere in Europe (notably the Austro-Hungarian Empire), the spread of the universal ideology of nationalism resulted in the establishment of various particularistic states, rather than the adoption of Ottomanism as a form of universal civic nationalism as intended by the agents of reform. An explanation is, thus, required for "why anyone should have wanted to turn the pre-modern (...) 'low' cultures into modern, literate 'high' cultures, rather than adopting the nearest high culture [e.g. Ottomanism] of the dominant ethnic population in the state" (Smith 1998: 38). This paradox inherent in the Enlightenment between the universal and the particular is, thus, reborn in the philosophical foundations as well as the practice(s) of nationalism (Halliday 1992: 445). Out of the study of the Ottoman case develops a need to problematize the contradictory nature of European nationalism(s).

Thus, the co-constitution of several macro-dimensions that define 'modernity' - nationalism, capitalism, the modern-state, rationality, liberal political subjectivity - leads to a problematic 'package-concept' that needs to be unbundled to understand the specific interactions and spatio-temporally sequences, but not generic temporal co-constitution, of these macro-phenomena in the Balkan context as part of ongoing socio-political struggles over the precise territorial and social definition of power and

property. What is required, therefore, is an explanation of the national *content* of the modern Weberian *form* of de-personalized political territorial rule and the corresponding *spatial* re-ordering of the inter-national system in the region. Crucial in this regard is the relationship between the social transformation and the creation of demographically and ethno-linguistically homogenous political subjectivities within the newly established 'modern' states. Contrary to assumptions about the congruity of 'modernity', 'nationalism' and 'capitalism', this chapter suggests that late Ottoman state formations are not outcomes of a universalized European modernity, either in its nationalist or capitalist form. Thus, not only the Franco-German division within the concept of nationalism needs to be deciphered, but also the social, spatial and epistemic expressions of modernity.

Against these holistic temptations, this chapter will argue that nationalism-formation in the late-Ottoman provinces, especially Greece, was the outcome of specific social struggles between the Ottoman centre and provincial landlords within their wider geopolitical context. Furthermore, this chapter will argue for the consideration of the effects of mass armies on the formation of mutually exclusive identities. The deployment of modernized military structures meant that, on the one hand, whole populations were involved in the military struggle. On the other hand, it also involved the collective threat of physical extermination, leading to the relational creation of consolidated, homogenous national identities. It is arguably through this physical, geopolitical differentiation, itself resultant from social struggles, that nationalism emerges.

This argument will be substantiated in three steps. First, the main strands in the wider literature on nationalism will be critically reviewed. This will show that this literature suffers from three limitations. Namely, its inherent modern functionalism does not sufficiently recognize the socially specific conditions leading to the emergence of nationalism-formations. This specification would include a differentiation between the particularistic logic of the German tradition in Gottfried Herder's *cultural* nationalism and the universal appeal of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *political* nationalism (Barnard 1983). Most importantly, however, the established discourse on nationalism does not sufficiently problematize the geopolitical contexts within which nationalism emerges. This will show that while the constructivist and English School's efforts in this regard have produced important insights into how nationalism impacts and changes in the international system, they equally fail to



introduce an explanation of nationalism that considers the geopolitical conditions of its emergence. A brief elaboration of Miroslav Hroch's account of late Habsburg nation-formation will reveal the importance of specific social contexts for understanding the emergence of national divisions. These are themselves subject to, and constituted by, geopolitical environments. This dialectical process between local and regional social struggles and wider geopolitical contexts does not necessarily correspond to a pre-conceived national form as a homogenous and natural political formation. Finally, on the basis of these critiques, an argument about the geopolitical formation of national divisions through mutually 'constitutive' forms of violence will be formulated with reference to the Ottoman context.

## **2.2 Modernist Theories of Nationalism**

Amazingly, the discipline of International Relations has usually left questions about the nature and origin of nationalism to a wide range of non-IR scholars. This is why the importance of calls for an opening of International Relations towards theories of nationalism can hardly be overstated. Like the historical turn in IR, the wider debates on nationalism started flourishing after the end of the Cold War and the emergence of various post-communist nationalist movements. In particular, the violent and turbulent break-up of Yugoslavia has prompted much reflection on the themes of nations and nationalism within a variety of social science disciplines.

The debate initially evolved around the primordial vs. modernist approach to understanding nationalism (cf. Özkirimli 2000). Primordialism, or as it is sometimes called 'perennialism' assumes the continuity and long-term lineages of nations as historically grown, but largely unchanged and unchangeable forms of social collectivities holding corresponding territorial claims to 'homelands' (Smith 1991, 1992). In contrast to these practices of essentialising and naturalising national differentiation, modernist theories of nationalism point to the voluntary, constructed and historically specific nature of these social formations and elaborate on the process of their social construction, frequently associated with the advent of European or capitalist modernity.<sup>17</sup> This literature on nationalism has produced a vast proliferation of studies. The original 'pioneers' include, amongst others, Elie Kedourie (1993),

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<sup>17</sup> Due to restrictions of space and the increasing academic consensus in favour of the modernist argument (Özkirimli 2000: 220), this debate will not be elaborated in greater detail. Instead, the modernists' general premise about the artificial and historically specific character of nations is accepted in principle.

Ernest Gellner (1983), Eric Hobsbawm (1990), Benedict Anderson (1983) and Tom Nairn (1981, 1997).

Most of the arguments advanced by modernist theories of nationalism recognize capitalist (or 'industrial') development as central to an explanation for the emergence of nationalism. However, they conceptualize capitalism in very different ways. While Gellner, in an apparent bid to avoid historical materialist terminology (while ultimately making a materialist argument) prefers the term 'industrial society', Benedict Anderson refers to it as 'print capitalism' and Tom Nairn as 'uneven capitalist development'. According to Ernest Gellner, whose personal background in socialist Czechoslovakia made him wary of being identified as a Marxist, 'industrial society' required a common high culture for its reproduction. National culture, therefore, was "no longer merely the adornment, confirmation and legitimation of a social order which was also sustained by harsher and coercive constraints; culture is now the necessary shared medium, the life-blood perhaps rather the minimal shared atmosphere, within which alone the members of the society can breathe and survive and produce" (Gellner 1983). Thus, a certain degree of cultural homogeneity is understood as a requirement for the smooth operation of industrial capitalism. Benedict Anderson's arguments about the consequences of the introduction of a capitalist print-media enterprise looking for, and consequently creating a market of literate, nationally educated "citizens" is slightly more elusive about its association with capitalist development (Anderson 1991). It was, according to Anderson, through the introduction of print-capitalism that common vernaculars were created. The profit motive and the stimulation of demand are, therefore, central underlying assumptions within his argument. Eventually, the thus 'imagined community' of the nation takes on a quasi-religious function in secular societies. Lastly, Eric Hobsbawm's account (Hobsbawm 1990) equally emphasizes the relationship between capitalism and nationalism as an elite project, whose role he saw "in the creation of industrial economies and the transition from local to national economic systems. European nationalisms during the "liberal era" (1830-80), for example, helped to justify the creation of national economies and the integration of ever larger territories and populations into unified economic and political institutions" (Kramer 1997). He duly points out the mismatch between the global reach of liberal economics and the national nature of political structure. Thus, while economists had to recognize the fact that the 19<sup>th</sup> century world economy was inter-national as opposed to global (Hobsbawm 1990: 25), they had not found an explanation for this national

fragmentation. In his more recent work, even Anthony Smith, who has built his career on emphasising the essential and culturalist nature of nations and their transhistorical boundedness to an inherited territory (Smith 1983), has conceded some ground to this prevalent modernist conception of nationalism. Being primordialism's godfather, he does not claim that nationalism is merely an epiphenomenon of capitalist development, yet he nevertheless sees capitalism and nationalism as the two social forces having "shaped the modern world" (Smith 1998: 47). Tom Nairn most explicitly refers to uneven capitalist development as emphasizing a 'reactive' form of nationalism. In other words, nationalism is understood as a defensive mechanism employed by the 'sufferers' of capitalist development (Nairn 1981, 1997). Nationalism, thus, appears as a project to consolidate state development territorially in the form of the nation-state in the light of the contradictions of uneven capitalist development.

"Capitalism, even as it spread remorselessly over the world to unify human society into one more or less connected story for the first time, also engendered a perilous and convulsive new fragmentation of that society. The socio-historical cost of this rapid implantation of capitalism into the world society was nationalism'. There was no other conceivable fashion in which the process could have occurred" (Nairn 1981: 341).

In other words, capitalist development, as a result of its global, yet uneven spread, generates multiple national societies.

In essence, modernist theories of nationalism tend to portray capitalism and nationalism as intrinsically interlinked, complementary developmental paths into the totality of an unfolding globalising modernity. Gellner's approach, for example, was aptly described by Benedict Anderson as a theory "that nationalism is at bottom nothing more (or less) than a necessary and thoroughly functional response to the Great Transformation from static agrarian society to the world of industry and mechanical communication" (Anderson 1994: 10). It is not clear, however, how this does not apply to Anderson's own argument, given his identification of nationalism as an intrinsic part of an unfolding modern world. In other words, Gellner and Anderson fit "nationalism to certain universal and inescapable sociological constraints of the modern age" (Chatterjee 1993: 22). This means that 'national' fragmentation is explained with reference to capitalist development only. Nationalism as a separate sociological concept distinct from capitalist development becomes superfluous as an explanans and becomes part of the explanandum instead (Brubaker

1996). Hence, on the one hand, there is the problem that nationalism becomes a product of a holistic trajectory of modernity rather than a distinct phenomenon necessitating a more specific explanation. On the other hand, it remains unclear why this modern totality expands outward in a territorially fractured, rather than universal manner. In other words, the problem exposed initially between the universal and the particular is also reflected within the literature on nationalism. Political subjects were diversified and territorially fragmented in a more radical and substantive way than ever before at a time when universal political philosophies and institutionally homogenous forms of social organization emerged.

### *The Janus Face of Nationalism*

This conceptual tension between the universal scope of ‘modernity’ and the contradictory fragmenting territorial outcomes is not only a problem emerging from studying the history of capitalism, however. It is, rather, already visible in the intellectual history of nationalism as expressed in the division into its Rousseauian/French/Enlightenment/Cosmopolitan form in Western Europe and its Herderian/German/Volk equivalent in Germany. Even though this differentiation between ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ or ‘French’ and ‘German’ forms of nationalism was extensively studied within the literature of nationalism itself (e.g. Plamenatz 1973), the way in which International Relations has adopted the study of nationalism as a ‘modernist -international- imperative’ fails to differentiate between diverse forms of nationalism. As will be shown in what follows, it is precisely the variability of the underlying social forces of various nationalisms that render its understanding as a coherent social phenomenon or a generic explanatory category highly problematic. Obscuring these distinctions between various nationalisms renders invisible the underlying contradiction between a racially exclusivist historical manifestation of popular sovereignty and a contradictory cosmopolitan Enlightenment with allegedly identical historical/philosophical origins. The latter’s truly contradictory character becomes evident if considered that nationalism is mostly understood to express political emancipation, poised to produce a modern, emancipated and liberated national subject. Originally, nationalism “could not but foster the belief that the struggle against Absolutism and tyranny bore a definite universalistic undertone (...), which had to do more with a human, rationally constituted community and less with an excluding fatherland” (Koutalis 2003). Yet in its concrete historical expression, it usually produced the opposite – programmes of national

homogenization that led to exclusive forms of sovereignty which usually did not even keep the promise of political emancipation for the homogenized parts of the population either. The following will try to answer the question as to when and how the perceivably universalistic, emancipatory ideal of the Enlightenment turned on its head and created exclusive forms of 'national' political subjectivity. This process of discursive 'otherization' (or demonizing of a social group as a mirror image) leads to exclusion, repression and expulsion of elements considered incongruous with homogeneity, culminating in genocidal practices (Mann 2005). As Elie Kedourie put it: "in fact, it is these countries which most clearly show that nationalism and liberalism far from being twins are really antagonistic principles" (Kedourie 1993: 104).

This brief elaboration on the binary nature of nationalism goes to show that there are difficulties with directly relating exclusive nation-state formation and ethnic homogenization to capitalist modernity. The restrictive, constraining and fragmenting nature of nationalism does not usually constitute or even coincide with popular political emancipation. Rather, using capitalist modernity as an explanation implies an ex-post historicisation of actions and events that were, at the time, not purposive or intent on emancipating political subjects (Özkirimli and Sofos 2008), but contingent on social struggles outside of the theoretical remit of theories of nationalism. This core contradiction within the concept of nationalism, therefore, replicates a problem we have already encountered when dealing with the expansion of capitalism. Nationalism and capitalism, according to Anthony Smith, the two defining features of modernity, propose a theoretically universal political ideology, the universalization of which, paradoxically, expresses itself in various forms of differentiation and societal segmentation.

### **2.3 Collective Identities and the Enlightened Creation of Political Subjectivity**

One has to consider the impact of modernity, or at least modern forms of sovereignty, in another way as well though. De-personalized modern rule and the division of the private from the public, at least theoretically, turns royal subjects into rights-bearing formally equal citizens. This serves as the basis for developing modern notions of citizenship based on *national* self-determination. 'Freed' in this way from personalized forms of domination, nation-states are frequently associated with the "new order in freedom, based upon the autonomy of the individual" (Kohn 1967). It is

not merely the facilitation of exchange and the sophistication of production that requires new means of communication provided for only by multiple national societies that make this a phenomenon so specific to the 'industrial society'. Beyond the functional needs of the new social order, nationalism also fulfils a socio-psychological function. It was the 'freeing' of the individual that necessitated new forms of social cohesion after leaving its stationary and heritable position in the pre-modern society. Dislocating the subject in an abrupt and violent exposure to the impersonal relations of the market as the environment within which it would have to reproduce itself has left individuals instantaneously vulnerable to the contradictions, existential as well as epistemological insecurities of the modern world. These could only be overcome by the creation of a superimposed, collective social identity. This, then, was done by evoking 'nationalist' myths, history and language. Industrial society generates not only homogeneity, as such, but the new individual requires new forms of social cohesion and identity. This position complements Benedict Anderson's emphasis on nationalism as a neo-religion emanated through print capitalism within modern secular society.<sup>18</sup> The conditions for the emergence of nationalism are not just located within a transformed mode of production, but within a new kind of political subjectivity, i.e. that of the 'industrial society'. Social relations, thus de-personalised, spelled the end to divine legitimacy. Previously, a religious value-system, codified internationally in the Peace of Augsburg's *cuius regio eius religio* principle, used to provide subjects with their static, spiritually ordained space in society. This new secular source of political subjectivity [nationalism] not only filled the gap that the decline of religion as the typical dynastic ruling ideology had left, but was also associated with new forms and structures of social interaction.

Modernity and the Enlightenment then generate, according to this liberal story of the emerging inter-national state-system, the process of self-realisation. The latter, however, is only possible within the community, or rather within a multiplicity of, more specifically, 'national' communities. It could be argued that this is a transhistorical reality of human social life, for as Kedourie put it with reference to Fichte and Kant, it is always a truism that "man attains a determinate position in the scheme of things and fixity in nature only because he is in a particular association" (Kedourie 1993: 32). National self-determination, according to most theories of

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<sup>18</sup> Anderson suggests that it would "make things easier if one treated it [nationalism] as if it belonged with 'kinship' or 'religion' rather than with 'liberalism' or 'fascism'" (Anderson 1991: 5).

nationalism, constitutes a distinctly modern condition since this process is only required because of a preceding process of alienation of the individual in modern society which necessitates self-realisation beyond a mere subsistence-economy level. Thus, the Enlightenment and nationalism are understood to provide the foundation for defining polities by their political constitution based on a 'popular will'. The expression of the latter is thought to take place within established pre-state ethno-linguistic communities. It is, therefore, only "with the spread of nationalism, [that] natural frontiers came to mean the frontiers of a nation as determined by a linguistic map" (Kedourie 1993: 10).

The problem with these modernist theories of nationalism, whilst creating the strong link with secularisation which is normally taken to be part of a wholesale model of capitalist modernity, is, however, according to Elbe, that "they do not investigate in greater detail this 'need' for meaning and identity" (Elbe 2002: 81). This problem has been highlighted by Elbe's reading of Nietzsche's 'incomplete nihilism' as the driving force behind European nationalist sentiments:

"Structural and Marxist accounts are effective in explaining the self-interest of certain segments of society to advocate nationalist sentiments, but, despite the complexities of their positions, often face greater difficulty in explaining why people actually believed the nationalist ideas and why they acquiesced in their own exploitation" (Elbe 2002: 83).

This is a legitimate question and Elbe claims to have found the answer in a timeless condition of humanity: their need for loyalty and solidarity as well as self-identification. This condition is, however, neither restricted to modernity or Western Europe. Thus, in Nietzsche's account, Christianity and modern nationalism are both "examples of the will-to-truth that is evident in much of the history of European culture" (Elbe 2002: 82) – constituting two closely following psycho-social sequences of European historical development. Whilst Nietzsche's approach to nationalism is convincing to the extent that the modern nation-state did fill this 'nihilistic gap' with the kind of meaning and existential security previously provided for by religion, it not only overlooks the specificity of de-personal relations within capitalist modernity, but it also raises the question as to whether a Nietzschean account can comprehend how nationalism emerges in non-European or non-Christian societies where the influence of the Enlightenment and secularism cannot be taken for granted in a similarly

effectual way.<sup>19</sup> The new nationalisms in the Middle East and the Balkans were, for example, more harmonizing with religion than in some parts of Western Europe. But even here the break with religious forms of legitimacy is still not complete as the continuously strong position of Christianity in European conservatism compellingly illustrates. Rather than two mutually exclusive sequences of identity formation replacing one another, the clergy actually transgressed from its initial opposition to one of the major catalysts of Christian nationalist movements. This form of national-religious amalgamation was especially strong in the Greek case.<sup>20</sup>

However, there is another aspect to the emergence of nationalism(s) concerning the dialectical way in which these histories have been ‘created’. This process increasingly influenced and formed not only their own ‘national’ narratives, but also the ‘other’ outside, i.e. the relational aspects of this self-definition. This, therefore, goes beyond the problem of nationalism within its ‘domestic’ parameters, but also concerns the geopolitical dimension of the emergence of nationalism. There exists an odd silence about this problem within the social theories of nationalism. This is why the following section will discuss the potential for an international theory of nationalism.

## **2.4 International Relations and Nationalism**

This case of mutual neglect between nationalism and International Relations is duplicated within the literature on International Relations. Despite the centrality of the concept of the ‘national’ to the discipline defining subject of the ‘international’, surprisingly little attention has been paid to nationalism within International Relations (Lapid, Y. and Kratochwil, F. 1996). One exception to this rule, Bruce Hall, has already been discussed. Apart from Hall, another noteworthy attempt to problematize nationalism in International Relations (or rather in *International Society*), has been deployed by the English School scholar, James Mayall. He develops an account of the effects of nationalism on International Relations (Mayall 1990). In doing so, Mayall

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<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the influence of the Enlightenment in the Balkans see Fischer-Galait (1975) and Sugar (1975)

<sup>20</sup> It has to be noted here that Greek nationalism was not supported by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This is not to say, however, that landed clergymen did not take part in the revolt or that the newly founded autocephalous church of Greece did not help the secessionist effort. Equally, the national movement itself was always keen to point to its strong Orthodox/religious character. Lastly, the ethnic differentiation between ‘Greeks’ and ‘Turks’ was drawn on the religious denominations within the Ottoman Empire.



puts the idea forward that Absolutist 'sovereignty' is generally opposed to the new social phenomenon of 'nationalism'. The former is constituted by a system of dynasts establishing their domain through divine legitimacy, whereas the latter constitutes a form of liberal emancipation from dynastic rule through implementing popular rather than dynastic sovereignty. According to Mayall, these two essentially contradictory appearances of sovereignty then develop forms of mutual 'accommodation'. This means in most cases, however, that nationalism and dynastic territoriality 'merge' and, thereby, 'freeze' the territorial integrity of existing pre-national states (Mayall 1990: 35). However, nationalism 'overcomes' sovereignty, in the sense of a territorial reconfiguration of political rule, only in a minority of cases.

From this it is clear that Mayall does not problematize the social origins of nations and nationalism per se. Instead, he appears to borrow from the primordial literature. 'People', in his account, are either "historical communities" or "those whose collective identity is being created within frontiers handed down to them" (Mayall 1990: 2, 150). Thus, while Hall accepts the premises of the modernist literature on nationalism (Hall 1999: Ch. 2), there appears to be an implicit endorsement of a perennialist argument, despite the fact that, as Brubaker observes, this position has now lost most academic support (Brubaker 1996: 15).

Lastly, as previously mentioned, Tom Nairn, through his appropriation of uneven development as a cause for the rise of nationalism, relates the emergence of nationalism to international relations. More precisely, he claims that nationalism is part and parcel of the periphery's effort to catch up and, having realized their backwardness in relation to other social formations, form strong, defensive societies with a national character. This nation-formation is not, therefore, pursued according to an 'internalist' dynamic or transformation, but out of an 'externally' conditioned necessity to pursue further development (Nairn 1981). Hence, Nairn's greatest emphasis is on inter-national unevenness of development as a generic condition for nationalism's rise.

Even though this consideration of the historically observable unevenness between Western, metropolitan development and the backwardness of 'late-coming' societies presents an inter-national dimension to the study of nationalism, Nairn's understanding of national differentiation strictly in terms of unevenness is problematic. It does not question the constitution of different, multiple societies prior to uneven development. Equally, it fails to consider the role of geopolitical conflicts and their outcomes in relation to nationalist developments. In other words, it explains

the emergence of *a* generic form of nationalism (e.g. ‘Ottomanism’) but not the emergence of *multiple* post-Ottoman nationalisms. In the context of the Balkans, however, development occurred broadly within one – Ottoman – society while national/territorial differentiation was arguably more owed to the unintended results of military engagements, rather than a direct territorial reflection of pre-independence informal developmental differentiations.

In sum, the study of nationalism within IR has mostly focussed on the *impact* of emerging national movements on International Relations. While this constitutes an important aspect capable of enriching the analysis of various specific transformations, this did not usually entail a *critical* engagement with the theoretical premises of the sociology of nationalism itself. Rather, constructivist and English School accounts have thus far appropriated the findings of this literature *uncritically*, albeit on different strands therein. This means, in turn, that, like theories of nationalism, Mayall and Hall omit how geopolitical and world historical developments have contributed to generating the social conditions of nation-formation. To the degree that these dimensions are problematized at all, modernist arguments, based on the geopolitical or capitalist generation of change as international determinism, are usually reified. Thus, like Bruce Hall, James Mayall is concerned with the effects of nationalism on the international system, externalising the study of nationalism’s origin to the dedicated body of literature. This means that Mayall as well as Hall, despite their promising research questions, do not problematize the vital juncture between international relations, geopolitics and the emergence of multiple nationalisms. In other words, the question remains unanswered as to how geopolitical dynamics constitute a crucial part of explaining the origin of nationalism. It can be confirmed, therefore, that just as theories of nationalism remain silent on the issue of international relations, International Relations literature itself, to the extent that it problematizes the issue of nationalism at all, embraces these theories – including all their shortcomings.

#### *The Modernist (mis)understanding of Nationalism in International Relations*

The above critique does not suggest, however, that the study of difference and the historical emergence of a multiplicity of societies received no attention in the field of International Relations (e.g. Walker 1993; Inayatullah and Blaney 2003). However, there is a problem with the way in which IR has tried to approach this problem -in that nationalism is only considered as part and parcel of a wider transition towards

*modern* IR, which is thought to logically complement territoriality of rule and capitalist social relations, including their national form. This is an argument particularly developed within historical materialism. Here the argument goes that ‘goods’ required for the smooth operation of the market and capital are provided for by the modern territorial nation-state (cf. Wood, E. 2002a). Equally, liberal notions of national self-determination are thought to be derived from the universal emancipatory claims of the Enlightenment. This is in contrast to the ahistorical realist notion of national ‘units’.

In consequence, Ellen Wood calls for a disentanglement “[of] the ‘Enlightenment project’ from the culture of capitalism”, for there are, according to Wood, “various cultures of the Enlightenment [which] are united in their difference from the culture of capitalism”(Wood 2000: 405). However, she still holds that “[t]he emergence of capitalism was closely tied to the evolution of the modern nation-state, and that close link has shaped the development and expansion of capitalism ever since. The global economy as we know it today is still constituted by national entities” (Wood, E. 2002a: 17). Thus, “the universalisation of capitalism has also meant, or at least been accompanied by, the universalisation of the nation-state” (Wood, E. 2002b: 25).

As previously mentioned, on a conceptual level, it seems difficult to defend the natural congruity of a variety of nationalisms, capitalism and modern states as various mutually re-affirming planes of the same totalizing modernity. The concurrence of nationalism as a mass-mobilising political identity, capitalism as a mode of social reproduction and territorial rule as a modern form of political organisation cannot itself establish a causal nexus between these elements of modernity. Hannes Lacher critiques historical materialism altogether for falling into this trap of confusing capitalism with other elements of modernity. For him, “Marxists have always been insistent that these phenomena are not autonomous, but are the superstructural expressions, in the realms of politics and ideology, of the real innovation: the rise of a capitalist economy and a bourgeois class” (Lacher 2006a: 101). This presupposition is necessary, for “if capitalism has only spread across Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (and even then in a protracted way), then what are we to make of the great innovations of modernity: the scientific revolution, individualistic subjectivity, rationalist epistemologies foremost among them?” (Lacher 2006a: 101). And what are we to make of nationalism as the specific form of modern sovereignty?

Lacher is critical of what he identifies as a mainstream Marxist position, namely that every feature of modernity is reduced to a “superstructural expression” of it. This means that, in general, “we have to be careful to attribute not too much generative power to capital” (Lacher 2006a: 102). Yet, this is not only a problem for Marxist approaches, but IR theory in general. As was demonstrated, assuming a causal link between capitalism and nationalism is precisely what the vast majority of available explanations of ‘nationalism’ do. However, as Hannes Lacher and Benno Teschke have pointed out, global capitalism does not require the inter-nation-state system for its reproduction, since multiple and territorially faceted realms were a historical ‘legacy’ of absolutist inter-dynastic rivalries rather than capitalist development (Teschke and Lacher 2007). Neither was nationalism in its ‘pure’ French form a theory of various territorially defined ethnic nationalisms, but a theory of cosmopolitan republicanism. The problem for grand narratives in historical approaches to IR theory is, therefore, the supposition of the reproductive logic of capitalism producing particularistic outcomes.

What is required, therefore, is a theory of nationalism that can account for the historically specific social origins of various nationalisms, instead of subsuming them under a meta-narrative of global modernization. In opposition to Gellner, Miroslav Hroch has explored the possibilities for such a theory. In addition to a general argument about the variable social origins of various nationalisms, or rather for the social formations that entered the collective historiographic memory as ‘nations’, Hroch was critical specifically of Gellner’s construction of a strong link between industrialization (read: capitalism) and nationalism, which, according to Hroch was far from clear (Hroch 1985, 1994). He makes the crucial distinction between what he generalizes as ‘Western European’ societies where “the late feudal regime was subsequently transformed, by reforms or revolution, into a modern civil society *in parallel with* the construction of a nation-state as a community of equal citizens” (Hroch 1994: 80) and ‘Eastern European’ societies where *national movements* aspired to secede from polities thought to misrepresent their interests. It is only the latter movements that entail a spatial element in the form of a claim to a ‘homeland’ of a specific group. Hroch further differentiates national movements by distinguishing between various phases and types. While some of these ideal-typical categorizations are, by Hroch’s own admission, problematic, he nevertheless provides the important insight into the differentiated social origins of nationalism that modernist theories

tend to subsume under a theoretical grand narrative. Consequently, Hroch defines the Nation as

“a large social group characterized by a combination of several kinds of relations (economic, territorial, political, religious, cultural, linguistic and so on) which arise on the one hand from the solution found to the fundamental antagonism between man and nature on a specific compact land-area, and on the other hand from the reflection of these relations in the consciousness of the people” (Hroch 1985: 4-5).

Hroch’s approach does not attempt, therefore, to develop a new, ‘correct’ theoretical account of nationalism. Rather, he rightly emphasizes the variety of social causes behind the variety of nationalisms. Thus, as Hroch put it, “all defensible conclusions remain no more than partial findings and all ‘theories’ should be taken as projects for further research” (Hroch 1994: 78). He also does not understand the success of nationalism as a result of the linear ‘concentric diffusion’ of Enlightenment ideals. This is because “nation-building was never a mere project of ambitious or narcissistic intellectuals, and ideas could not flow through Europe by their own inspirational force. Intellectuals can ‘invent’ national communities only if certain objective preconditions for the formation of a nation already exist (Hroch 1994: 79)”. Instead, he suggests that national movements are only possible on the condition of a general social crisis within the old order. Thus, essential ‘difference’ does not lead to political fragmentation as part of an ideological permeation of Nationalist thought. What Hroch described as “a social tension or collision that could be mapped onto linguistic (and sometimes also religious) divisions” (Hroch 1994: 86) is not only the precondition, but rather the deeper cause for the emergence of national movements. Thus, social conflicts, which are not necessarily a direct outcome of Enlightenment ideology or capitalist expansion, were expressed in the language of national ‘liberation’. Hroch’s account can serve as a reminder, therefore, not to confuse the discursive expression of a movement and the ‘real’ underlying social conditions of its emergence. Moreover, these include geopolitical as much as social causes. Thus, while Hroch, like most other writers on nationalism, does not include any explicit reflections on international relations, his historically and theoretically open explanation of the various social origins of Nationalism avoids Anthony Smith’s essentialism as well as the modernist’s functionalism.

## 2.5 Geopolitics and Nationalism

This missing, more dedicated reflection on the international causes of nationalism is what will be attempted in the following section. It will illuminate the intrinsic relationship between nationalism and political violence. The conceptual relationship between nationalism and international relations is understood here in historical terms as geopolitical encounters, which frequently took on a physical and violent form and generate, rather than reflect, difference.

According to Neo-Weberian Historical Sociology (Tilly 1990: 114f), it is not the requirements of the market, but increasing geopolitical competition that necessitates the homogenization of a subject people as part of a wider state-building project. A series of revolutions from above designed to meet the increasing challenge 'from outside' were substantiated by the 'nationalisation' or ethnic homogenization of these societies (cf. Rae 2002). Nationalism, therefore, is conceptualised as the cultural backbone of socialisation programmes sustaining processes of defensive modernization. Indeed, it is this military consolidation that usually precedes capitalist development, rather than resulting from it. This differentiating moment does not come about as a result of various nationalisms being intellectually persuasive. Exploring the relationship between nation-formation and the geopolitical appears to yield results. Violent encounters establish clear distinctions between various 'nations', rather than geopolitics resulting from conflicting interests between pre-existing nations with mutually conflicting interests. Due to the relational definition of identity, the social definition of 'a nation' and, by extension, power is only fully consolidated via the encounter with a perceived collective enemy, as previously, "despite their intellectual and social wealth, the Greeks did not know who they were" (Glenny 2000: 26; Triandafyllidou and Paraskevopoulou 2002; Triandafyllidou 2005).

In sum, it can be argued that differentiation, rather than being a reflection of an intrinsic cultural disparity or unevenness of development, is understood here as a subjective definition of the communal self, which is usually a consequence of various forms of social practices (violence, commerce, etc.). Hence, in the Greco-Ottoman context, the ethno-genetic differentiating impact does not come about as a conscious or voluntary act of social engineering by elites 'from above', but as an unwilling effect of the collective experience of (modern) political violence. Hence, as Daniele Conversi put it, "[w]hat matters here is the effect of (external) violence and (internal) experience upon social organisation, particularly the organisation of space and

identity” (Conversi 1999: 570). As political violence changes with the introduction of salaried, standing armies, it is the historically unique experience of total war that produces particularly tight, mutually exclusive forms of social cohesion. “The result of the [modern] conflict is thus to heighten walls between groups where boundaries were hitherto tenuous, rarefied, or non-existing” (Conversi 1999: 568). In the Greek case, Sofos and Özkırmı have recently described this process as “constitutive violence”. Rather than pre-existing divisions providing a perennial cause for conflict (like in realism), it is the violent encounter itself that “provides the basis of a common framework for interpretation and self-identification for the insurgents, and confirmed the role of the Ottomans or the Turks as the ‘Other’” (Özkırmı and Sofos 2008: 26).

This military encounter cannot provide a satisfying explanation of differentiation in its own right though, since it was itself the product of social conflicts not associated to nationalism. In the context of the Greek revolt, nationalism did not succeed through the emanation of a national ideology, which was of little influence, or by the largely absent capitalist (under)development. Rather, it was mass warfare introduced by the modernizing Ottoman and Egyptian troops with Napoleonic training that explains the success of nationalism.

The broad differentiation between French and German philosophies of nationalism has shown, however, that not only their constitutions are highly differentiated, but also their representations as different social trajectories. Romantic nationalism is “a reactionary defence of German *Kultur* against the *civilisation française* and English pragmatism” (Ringer 1990: 85-90). Herder, in other words, can be read as a reaction to the Napoleonic invasions (Dufour 2007: 599), whereas the French Republican ideals arguably had lost their appeal in France itself at the very latest by the end of Napoleon’s reign. Hence, instead of a self-sustained permeation of ideology or the expression of a capitalist superstructure, nationalism is best understood as an aspect, and indeed, beginning of a process that Hans-Ulrich Wehler called ‘defensive modernization’ starting a long *process* at the end of which stands the establishment of a *capitalist inter-national* system.

## **2.6 Nation-formation as non-transition**

This chapter started out claiming that no convincing argument can be made about the congruous development of the Weberian territorial form of sovereignty, the capitalist mode of production or the national character of depersonalized rule. This is in

accordance with one central premise of this thesis which claims that various forms of ‘modernity’ have to be understood as having distinct and specific social origins. This becomes especially clear when looking at the complex historical development that led to the creation of ‘modern’ states in the Balkans. The southeastern European trajectory into what is conventionally understood to constitute ‘modernity’ defies notions of a unilinear trajectory towards a global capitalist/modernist/national functionally coherent totality. What is required, instead, then, is the dissociation of capitalism, the Enlightenment, nationalism and other features conventionally subsumed under the label of ‘modernity’. What is proposed here is an investigation into their distinctive socio-historical origins within historically and geographically specific contexts.

With regards to the Ottoman Empire, this means that “the standard evaluations of Ottoman ‘backwardness’ are exaggerated when applied to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century” (Sugar 1977: 282), while the ‘modern’ and Enlightened character of the nationalist movements that came to replace Ottoman rule is commonly overstated. In other words, what is argued here and what will be substantiated in the following historical reconstruction is that national secessions do not per se represent modernization of political rule or the international system. This disjuncture between national secession and modernity will be affirmed in three ways.

First, nationalist movements in the Balkans were, at least if measured by their result, not secular. Most of the post-Ottoman state formations accommodate a religious dimension with the seceded states through the establishment of autocephalous churches. Rather than nationalism and religion being two mutually exclusive sequences of identity-forming ideologies replacing one another, as described in the Nietzschean narrative, religion constituted a major catalysts of nationalist movements. The conservative understanding of Balkan nationalisms would be that “most of the Balkan Enlightenment emphasized Western scientific achievements in order to defeat Orthodox religious conservatism” (Roudemotof 1998: 26). This, however, is problematic on two counts. On the one hand, modern Greece and other post-Ottoman state formations did not become secular. Instead, Orthodox religion was re-formulated and reframed through newly founded national autocephalous churches replacing the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople as the spiritual authority. On the other hand the most ‘secular’ polity emerging from the Ottoman maze was the Republic of Turkey itself.



Secondly, the reactionary post-Napoleonic European order would not have legitimized a state emerging from a successful social revolution. Along with the balance of power, preventing social change and revolt was one of the core objectives of the post-1815 Concert of European powers. This is why the legitimizing act for all the new Balkan states consisted in the appointment of European dynasts as constitutional monarchs. Thus, rather than applying the French Enlightenment ideal of popular sovereignty to the newly emerged 'modern' polities, the new nation states were forced to import rulers from European families<sup>21</sup>, such as the Wittelsbach (Greece), Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (Bulgaria) and Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen (Romania) gentries. This was, however, not so much a requirement of institutional borrowing from Western Europe in order to create an effective Weberian bureaucratic complex, even though the import of modernizing European bureaucrats was a side effect. Rather, it was a form of imposing the established 19<sup>th</sup> century dynastic norms onto the region. To the extent that it was effective at all, 19<sup>th</sup> century internationalism thereby universalized dynastic rule, rather than liberal Enlightenment thought. Indeed the effective way to reconcile the philosophical claims of the latter with the political reality of the former was German romanticist nationalism.

The third constraining factor of the 19<sup>th</sup> century world order was the balance of power. The British hegemon remained very reluctant to accept the Greek cause for independence just as it saw an Arab uprising as a last resort to the Sultan's resilience one century later. As will be explained in what follows, Britain had relied on the *Pax Ottomanica* up until the outbreak of the First World War as a means of regional 'order' in southeastern Europe and the Middle East. Indeed, the Empire was formally acknowledged as a European power in the Treaty of Paris of 1856 after the Crimean War.<sup>22</sup> The *Pax Ottomanica*, therefore, can be seen as the southeastern branch of the *Pax Britannica*. In the light of the economically and militarily most advanced state in principle supporting Ottoman rule, it remains difficult to equate *raison d'état* thinking, modern rule and hegemonic 'order' with the fragmentation of political rule into purportedly 'national' constituents. Not least since thousands of lives were sacrificed by the *Realpolitik* of France and Britain aiming at preserving the Empire during the Crimean War.

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<sup>21</sup> One exception was Serbia which had preserved a native ruling dynasty as well as a semi-independent clergy.

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion see chapter 6.

## 2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the various approaches to the problem of nationalism, both in the broader sociological and anthropological literature as well as within International Relations Theory, suffer from various shortcomings. On the one hand, these approaches deal with the world political dimension of nationalism only insofar as effects, rather than causes are concerned. On the other hand, to the degree that the problem of international relations as a *cause* are introduced, this comes in the form of a universalizing modernity, which comprises the nation form, besides capitalist social relations and territoriality, as an epiphenomenon of a wider transition towards a holistic understanding of modernity. It was argued that this holistic, modernist understanding of nationalism is problematic as it leaves no space for regionally and historically specific social transformations. Lastly, it was argued that there lies a peculiar generative capacity in forms of mass violence as they have developed since the Napoleonic wars. This, however, should not be read as a grand theory to counter extant approaches, but is, rather, a specific historical explanation applicable to the current example.

On the basis of these realizations, this chapter problematized the distinction between a French Republican ideology of nationalism and its contradiction in the form of a cultural, Herderian form of authoritarian nationalism. It was this latter, contradictory form that included notions of ethnic purity and exclusion as a self-defining act, with all its violent and vicious reverberations (Mann 2005). Instead of the realization of a French-Republican universal understanding of nationalism and the cosmopolitan worldview of Enlightenment philosophy, nationalism in the Ottoman context has to be seen as a process of cultural homogenization, which produces racially exclusive forms of sovereignty as well as causing one of the first historic examples of ethnic cleansings in a non-colonial environment.<sup>23</sup> Equally, the European system of states was concerned with the preservation of Ottoman rule, rather than the realization of a national right to self-determination. The question about the underlying social dynamics that caused this shift from universality to particularity therefore persists.

It is important to note, however, that this process of ethnic purification under the cloak of ‘modernization’ is still ongoing as is illustrated by the break-up of the

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<sup>23</sup> The overall numbers of victims and the exact start of atrocities are contested in Turkish/Ottoman and Greek nationalist historiographies respectively. However, the clear differentiation between Muslim and Christian subjects in the Ottoman legal system enabled the identification of ‘enemies’ for both sides, leading to well documented mutual expulsions and mass killings.

former Yugoslavia. This and other cases of violent ‘national’ secession serve as a reminder for the ontological and historical indeterminacy of the spatio-temporal limits of ‘the social’, the violent manifestation(s) of which, starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has been mostly futile and destructive more than ‘ordering’ global social relations. Instead of seeking a ‘natural’/‘national’ order of things, it is arguably more useful to accept that the definition of ‘the social’ is a specific result of social transformations and struggles that are neither reducible to an intrinsic nature or functional requirements of a totalizing capitalism, modernity or Enlightenment. Nor do they represent a finite design of the world map.

Modernist theories of nationalism have helped advance this insight by denaturalizing the concept of the nation and by revealing the social, rather than perennial content of this phenomenon. More problematically, however, the modernist argument was further developed into an automatism of nation-creation as a result of capitalist development perpetuating the spread of a homogenous European national form. In contrast, it was argued here with reference to Miroslav Hroch and Political Marxism, that various nationalisms have distinct and specific social origins, explicable in terms of unintended outcomes of social struggles over property and control over exploitable resources. Thus, while different nationalisms can, empirically speaking, in principle emerge from similar social constellations, the wide variation of concrete sources prohibits the induction of a general abstraction from which a grand theory about the global spread of nationalism could be developed.

The problematic and contradictory relationship between the theoretical claims regarding a universal European modernity and its peculiar fragmenting socio-political outcomes in southeastern Europe leaves some open conceptual and historical questions.<sup>24</sup> As was argued above and will be shown in the following chapters, answers to these questions have to be found in the specific dynamics of changing social relations between the centre and the periphery of the Ottoman Empire from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. After having elaborated the conceptual issues at stake, this thesis will therefore now turn to the historical reconstruction of these social transformations in the late Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>24</sup> This is not to argue that fragmentation was unique to southeastern Europe, but rather that the peculiar ways in which fragmentation occurs here and elsewhere require specific explanations in each instance.

### 3 Revisiting Ottoman Decline

#### The End of Ottoman Expansion and the Social Origins of ‘Modernity’

*‘A world-empire expands to the socio-technical limits of effective political control of the redistributive process, and then either shrinks or disintegrates.’*

*Wallerstein (1979: 390)*

#### 3.1 Introduction

The issue of ‘imperial decline’ has recently resurfaced within the field of IR. This has been precipitated by debates about the apparent demise of the American capitalist Empire, given a series of disastrous military engagements, an increasing negative foreign trade deficit, a crumbling US-led financial industry, the fall of the US Dollar as the world’s leading currency and the moral and symbolic decay of symbols of American power worldwide. These recent developments have prompted a return to the general interest in the concept of ‘empire’ within International Relations literature (Lieven 2003; Münkler 2005; Colás 2007; Pijl 2007). One result of this rise of interest in ‘Empire’ was the differentiation of different meanings of Empire, from so-called premodern, territorial or multi-national Empires, like Russia, China, Austria-Hungary as well as the Ottoman Empire, to Gallagher and Robinson’s useful distinction between formal and informal Empire (Gallagher and Robinson 1953), to Hardt and Negri’s all-encompassing global Empire of capital (Hardt and Negri 2000).<sup>25</sup>

Despite these vastly differing understandings of Empire, organic notions of rise and decline, expansion and contraction as natural and transhistorical trajectories remain a constant characteristic of the debates (Gilpin 1981; Doyle 1986; Kennedy 1989; Motyl 2001; Spruyt 2005). In other words, the rise and decline of ‘Empires’ is frequently characterized as part of the organically cyclical nature of *any* imperial formation, independent of their concrete historical formation. The Soviet, British, Spanish, Roman and Byzantine cases, to name but a few, are said to illustrate this point. With the recent failure of the United States in the Middle East, US Power is also supposed to have reached a point of ‘imperial overstretch’, after which a long and protracted period of ‘imperial implosion’ is likely to follow. This notion of Imperial cycles returns in important respects to Oswald Spengler’s original notion of a quasi-biological rise and decline of (in this case Western) civilisations, a process

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<sup>25</sup> For an introduction into the conceptual history of the term ‘Empire’ see Colás (2007: 5-17).

that is thought to be inevitable, irreversible and, as such, natural (Spengler 1991). Phases of decline, according to this tradition, lead to intense periods of inter-hegemonic conflict and ultimately a chaotic period of imperial hegemonic succession, which can explain the origins of the Great War amongst other things. What the US faces in 2009, the Ottoman Empire is thought to have faced in 1683. After a long period of successful conquest extended the sphere of Ottoman influence to the gates of Vienna, Ottoman territorial expansion finally came to a halt and, since then, retreated from its vast possessions in southeastern Europe and the Middle East - leading inevitably to its ultimate failure in 1922-23.

Rejecting this notion of 'Imperial failure', this chapter contends that 1923 represents not so much a 'terminal demise', but a re-incarnation. To substantiate this claim, this chapter will break with the prevailing unilinear conception of late Ottoman history and reconstruct a different narrative of Ottoman imperial decline. More specifically, it will be argued that, on the basis of a systematic incorporation of the social relations and conflicts that constituted and pervaded the Ottoman polity, a reconstruction of post-1683 developments shows that, rather than following a path-dependent process of imperial contraction, the deeper causes of Ottoman disintegration were rooted in the Porte's unremitting efforts to modernize and centralize the state apparatus. This generated a state-threatening resistance among the provincial notables. Consequently, it will be argued here that organic and deterministic theories of imperial decline are historically superficial and theoretically problematic. Quasi-realist theories of hegemonic/imperial decline obscure important processes that are crucial for understanding the nature and dynamic of disintegration and, by extension, the post-Ottoman political and geopolitical developments in the region. Most notably, they obscure the social origin of nationalist movements by naturalizing their emergence in the form of a Wilsonian narrative of national self-determination. A critique of organic theories of the rise and decline and their teleological understanding of Ottoman transformation, which neglects historical specificity, logically also implies a critique of methodological nationalism in general and, more specifically, its impact on post-Ottoman nationalist historiography.

In the first section of this chapter these conceptual issues with late Ottoman historiography will be discussed with reference to the problem of methodological nationalism in the Historical Sociology of International Relations. This will establish the need for a new historical and sociological narrative of the late Ottoman Empire, which seeks to overcome the problematic practice of "[u]sing the nation-state as an

inevitable culmination point” as well as “the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a base for understanding the earlier centuries of Ottoman history” (Abou-El-Haj 2005: 61). Instead of understanding the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a momentary appearance of modernity, the following narrative will therefore start reconstructing the process of Ottoman social transformation from the end of territorial expansion onwards. This will show that the second failed siege of Vienna in 1683 is widely and accurately understood as a crucial juncture which radically altered the traditional social fabric of the Ottoman Empire, both in the center as well as the periphery. However, this cannot justify the construction of teleological narratives of the Ottoman history between 1683 and 1923, especially within the historical materialist literature. In contrast, this chapter will follow a recent opening in Ottoman historiography that aims at rescuing the specificity of the social processes that characterized this period from a unidirectional and methodologically nationalist reading of Ottoman decline (Adanir and Faroqhi 2002; Abou-El-Haj 2005; Finkel 2005; Reinowski 2006).

The historical part will start by discussing the impact of the end of expansion, first on the Ottoman land regime and second on the Ottoman central administration. This brief summary of the most crucial social changes from 1683 onwards will demonstrate that the transformation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that culminated in the Ottoman modernization movement and the formation of post-Ottoman sovereign states is best understood as a social dynamic grounded in the antagonistic relationship between emerging peripheral aristocracies and an increasingly assertive central state in Istanbul. This will demonstrate that even though all parties to this conflict were subject to various geopolitical stimuli and world economic influences, this was not the result of a uniform and unidirectional trajectory towards an inevitable international ‘modernity’, but the product of a specific set of social struggles over sources of income and property.

### **3.2 Nationalist Historiography and Ottoman Decline**

Any historical transformation can be described as a dialectical process. However, understanding them simply as a binary inside/outside dialectics only, might obscure the role of other actors or spheres of interaction there might be within what can most generically be labelled ‘the social sphere’. ‘International history’, thus, not only takes place at what Rob Walker famously termed the conjuncture between a mutually constitutive ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, but also at various different levels, which might

not lend themselves easily to this clear modernist dichotomy, most famously authorized by Kenneth Waltz's 'Man, the State, and War' (Waltz 1959). This binary ontology is not always the methodologically most useful way of understanding social transformations, even if they carry strong geopolitical implications. The realist reduction of historically extremely diverse social formations to transhistorical 'units' within an anarchical 'structure' has attracted wide-spread criticism for its lack of understanding of the social and geopolitical change outside of this problematic dualism (Walker 1987; Schroeder, P. 1994).

This problem is not unique to Realism, however. In fact, it points to a wider problem within the social sciences, most poignantly described as 'methodological nationalism,'<sup>26</sup> i.e. the practice of reading contemporary national confines into the past. In contrast, the concept of 'global sociology'<sup>27</sup> aims at overcoming the epistemological dangers and ontological shortcomings attached to this practice by breaking up the modernist-nationalist confines of International Relations and replacing them with a more holistic, global, notion of the social. Yet, this concept is problematic for other reasons. The various calls for developing a world sociological approach, on the one hand, run the risk of losing track of historically unique social practices. In other words, while various forms of social relations persist trans-historically, any notion of geopolitics needs to be carefully historicised within any given social and historical environment so as to avoid historically specific ontologies, such as the 'inter-national'. This not only applies to the national/international, but also to the 'global'. Historicising geopolitics needs to consider all aspects of the "broad set of interrelationships" that constitute geopolitical practices (Halliday 1999b: 190), which cannot be subsumed by historically specific modernist, post-modernist or 'globalised' understandings.

On the other hand, it is equally not a recent transformation of social relations towards a 'globalised' world necessitating the rethinking of these divides. Rather, these 'national' Weberian 'iron cages' were never an ontologically accurate and methodologically sound way of conceptualising social reality into two neatly enclosed 'national' and 'international' categories of social interaction. The problem of methodological (inter)nationalism is due (and this continues to be the case) to the

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<sup>26</sup> The term 'methodological nationalism' was coined by the Portuguese sociologist Herminio Martins (1974). For a more recent cogent critique of methodological nationalism see Chernilo (2007), Wimmer and Schilerr (2002); for the specific implications for International Relations see Chernilo (2009)

<sup>27</sup> The concept of 'global sociology' was first developed by Wilbert E Moore (1966); also see Turner (1989, 1990)

reproductive logic of knowledge construction within national academies, established only relatively recently as part of the nationalistic project of post-Napoleonic state-formations. Similar conditions apply to the formation of historiography as a national science geared towards historical legitimization of rule.

In the case of Ottoman historiography, this relatively common problem is exasperated by the 'national' or 'ethnic' bias within all geographical branches of post-Ottoman historical scholarship. Turkish historians, until recently, discounted Ottoman history in favour of a narrative of the Turkic or Hitite tribes. Work on Arab and/or Balkan history, on the other hand, has a section on Ottoman 'legacies' (Brown 1996), describing them as an irregularity in their otherwise 'homogenous' linear national historical accounts. Inversely, Ottoman periods also fulfil two functions within Balkan nationalist historiography. Firstly, Ottoman rule constitutes the distinctive historical 'other' against which the non-Anatolian peoples of the Empire define their relatively new national 'self'. Secondly, the Ottoman 'interregnum' usually serves as a universal explanation of 'backwardness' in the region. Having been under an 'Oriental' regime, the so-called 'Turcokratia', prevented these societies from developing in accordance with their respective naturally more dynamic 'European' trajectories. One example of a historian emulating a 'national' bias is the Macedonian *Annales* Scholar, Traian Stoianovich: His conclusions might be owed to some degree to his theoretical preoccupations but his repeated credits to the Christian merchants of the Balkan Lands as the social engine behind the national, anti-Ottoman projects remain striking:

"The outstanding positive factor, however, in the spiritual and political awakening and cultural redirection of the Balkan peoples was the growth of a native merchant or middle class, which drew to the Balkans stray rays of the "sicle de lumieres" and accepted, however hesitatingly at first, the onerous task of creating new nation states" (Stoianovich 1960: 235).

Despite ascribing a central role to the 'merchant class' for the emancipatory struggle - a historically problematic assumption in and of itself- it is, more strikingly, the unspoken supposition of the pre-existence of a variety of 'Balkan peoples' that points to the issue at stake here. There is a distinct origin of these historical inaccuracies. Indeed, this is the monopolization of national historiography by these newly created states. The art of state-building has involved practices of producing nationalist narratives which obscure alternative 'pre-national narratives'. This projection of a nationally consolidated state ethnos back into the past does not just represent a



misfortunate distortion, but is itself politically constituted (Deletant, Hanak et al. 1988; Kramer 1997). However, even if there is no conscious political agenda behind these various ‘national’ reconstructions, nationalistic narratives are nevertheless continuously reproduced in less conscious forms, including literature serving no such purpose. This makes it difficult to navigate around nationalist historiography, since much of the empirical and archival primary work has been completed with the funding and guidance of nationalistic research agendas.<sup>28</sup>

The following historical analysis of long-term Ottoman social transformations attempts to rescue Ottoman historiography from the post-Ottoman nationalist narratives in order to recover “...the profound impact of [the Ottoman] changes on the nature of the emerging national states in the area [which] have often been ignored or interpreted in line with the writers' ideological and national biases” (Karpát 1972a: 243). This is not intended to replace a narrow ‘Serb’ or ‘Greek’ narrative with an equally restrictive Ottoman one. Rather, it is meant to practice a more open historical sociology conscious of these issues. As a result, this chapter understands Ottoman history not merely from an ‘internalist’ dynamic while equally avoiding a deterministic and universalizing understanding of ‘the international’. In doing so the three main lines of interaction in the late Ottoman Empire will be identified as, firstly, the Ottoman relations with European Great Powers, specifically Austria and Russia, secondly the relations between provincial elites and the centre and, lastly, the transformations within the center of Ottoman rule in Istanbul.

### **3.3 The Teleology of Ottoman Decline**

The problem of nationalism in historical sociology plays out with regards to the Ottoman Empire by way of naturalizing the nation-state form of political rule. This, however, implies that disintegration is understood as an intrinsic and inevitable part of a wider process of ‘modernizing’ political rule. In other words, the implication of universalizing the nation-state model is the naturalization of imperial decline, thereby developing an ingenious teleological historiography. The contemporary and familiar appear as the rule, whereas the past is externalized as an outdated and often illegitimate mirror image onto which the nation’s progress is projected. This means that with regards to the Ottoman Empire, not only Realism theories of imperial

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<sup>28</sup> For a historicisation of Europe within national confines see Anderson (1974); for an authoritative nationalist account of southeastern Europe see Stavrianos (2000 [1958])

decline, which base their claims on the cyclical nature of 'imperial' rule in general, but also a variety of Marxist explanations about the decline of the Ottoman Empire tend to follow a deterministic, linear conceptualisation of history.

These assumptions are grounded in the historical trajectory of Ottoman foreign relations from 1683 onwards. On an ideational level, the Ottoman worldview and the corresponding understanding of international relations were based on a notion of the 'inside' as the community of believers, the *umma*, or the Darüislam ('the house of Islam') and the 'outside' as the community of non-believers, the *dawla*, or the Darülharb ('the house of war'). Thus, war and violent expansion were inevitable and "no permanent peace was possible, in so far as it was ever possible, when the *shari'a* mandated that all agreements with non-Muslims were merely temporary truces" (Aksan 2006: 107). This constant readiness to go to war constituted, to a large extent, the Sultan's power base. This means that territorial decline directly leads into a crisis of legitimacy (Faroghi 2004: 8). It is important to note, however, that this state of war was merely hypothetical and, as Suraiya Faroghi points out, by no means represents the practice of Ottoman foreign relations in their entirety (Faroghi 2004: 3). While a *ghâzi*, or border lord regime existed that gave the Ottoman frontier a military quality in southeastern Europe, the established practice itself, *ghazâ* "was not jihad and did not adhere to jihad's legal norms; rather, it was an activity in which people of any faith or origin could join" (Darling 2000: 137). Thus, while Holy War against the Dawla constituted the spiritual legitimization of violent conquest (Darling 2000), this conquest was economically, rather than religiously driven (Anderson 1974: 364). Overall, as Faroghi observes, it was precisely because the Ottoman Islamic identity was beyond doubt and did not depend on constant violent manifestation, that an overall sense of pragmatism prevailed (Faroghi 2004: 5). What William McNeill called Europe's 'Steppe Frontier' (McNeill 1964) is, therefore, better understood in relation to a geopolitically driven mode of production and not as a faith-based practice. In other words, while an institutionalized constant readiness to pursue Islamic conquest existed in theory, its actual practice needs to be understood as a form of political and geopolitical accumulation, explaining the long-term consequences of the end of expansion, as it occurred after 1683. This we will turn to next.

Given this form of social reproduction, the end of territorial expansion leads to an economic crisis. This crisis has the potential to spiral into more general political

instability. In fact, the elements of society that had relied on the military frontier for their subsistence were hard hit by its closure (Abou-el-Haj 1969). As a result, the 'closing' of the Ottoman border is frequently understood as the historical benchmark that many explanations for Ottoman decline rest upon. Here, Ottoman history from 1683 to 1923 is characterized as a narrative of teleological decline. The unique trend in the Marxist literature on Ottoman decline is, therefore, a focus on the mode of social reproduction based on direct territorial control. Simon Bromley is one example amongst others who contends that

“...any dynamic that this society possessed was based on perpetual military conquest; the Ottoman polity was a 'plunder machine' (Jones 1981). In such a social order, the cessation of territorial expansion implied a gradual disintegration of the state and an increasingly counter-productive form of surplus extraction” (Bromley 1994: 48).

Equally, Perry Anderson sees the beginning of decline already in the 16<sup>th</sup> century:

“Once territorial expansion ceased, however, a slow involution of its whole enormous structure was inevitable [as] the stoppage of extensive acquisition of lands and treasure was inevitably to lead to much more intensive forms of exploitation within the bounds of Turkish power, at the expense of the subject *rayah* (peasant) class. The history of the Ottoman Empire from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century is thus essentially that of the disintegration of the central imperial State, the consolidation of a provincial landowning class, and the degradation of the peasantry” (Anderson 1974: 378).

Immanuel Wallerstein is similarly explicit about the inevitability of this process of imperial decline:

“The end of territorial expansion of the empire had been a severe blow to a foundation block of its structure, the *timar* system, in which newly acquired land was distributed to intermediate officials (*sipahis*) who served as local representatives of the central state and in particular as its tax collector” (Wallerstein 1989: 172).

Despite originating from vastly different historical materialist traditions, all three scholars imply that, given its mode of social reproduction, based on the accumulation of territory, geopolitical defeats had to translate into socio-economic crisis – read decline and disintegration. These interpretations offer an enormous improvement over primordial nationalistic accounts, since they spell out the constitutive link between pre-capitalist modes of surplus extraction that shaped Ottoman rule, substantiated by territorial expansion. Furthermore, it is unquestionable that from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, after having reached the limits of its territorial expansion at the second siege of Vienna in 1683, the Ottoman expansion stopped and domestic crises increased.

The Ottoman-Russian war of 1768 – 1774 and Muhammad Ali's Egyptian challenge to the central power of the Porte are only two episodes in a series of events that illustrate this point. Already sixteen years after the 'limits of expansion' were reached, the Sultan suffered his first territorial losses to Austria and Venice. These losses were codified at the Peace of Karlowitz in 1699 and again at Passarowitz in 1718. When analysing post-1683 Ottoman military history as a whole, these defeats can indeed be seen as the beginning of a historical trend, or as Anderson puts it, as the starting point of a historical process of 'involution' with Austria-Hungary and Russia as the main geopolitical contenders. In purely empirical terms, the geopolitical environment is, therefore, accurately described by these decline narratives.

The problem is rather with the usage of this long-term trajectory as a holistic explanation for the uneven process of Ottoman decline. It is argued here that even though large scale transformations occurred as a result of territorial stagnation, this ex-post rationalization of Ottoman decline cannot replace a historical sociological reconstruction of developments that were neither path-dependent nor predetermined. Rather, it produced incomplete and regionally specific results that are not reducible to these larger transformations. Most importantly, the long-term decline narrative obscures a detailed view of the social changes within the Empire that ultimately transformed into secessionist movements that produced the post-Ottoman international system.

However, like the previously mentioned cyclical, organic and deterministic theories of imperial decline, standard historical materialist explanations tend to interpret "the last centuries of the existence [of empires] unidirectionally as a history of decline" (Reinowski 2006). This underrates the historically contingent and geographically specific developments in the vastly diverse history of Ottoman regions. The problem is that they draw a macro-conclusion with all the benefits of hindsight from the period of territorial stagnation while discounting the specific constellation of social agents involved in this process. In contrast, it is argued here that while the 'closure of Ottoman borders' did set off social conflicts; these did not immediately and undoubtedly initiate a period of 'decline'. By subsuming a complex and uneven development, which was marked by Ottoman successes as much as by Ottoman defeats under a unilinear narrative of decline, Marxist accounts have not sufficiently moved beyond realist, World Systems and Neo-Weberian accounts. What they fail to explain is why the Ottoman Empire, persisting from 1683 to 1923, saw

periods of relative recovery, both financially as well as militarily and, finally, why its ultimate demise in 1923 was marked by the foundation of arguably the most formidable and prosperous country emerging from the Ottoman realm, the Republic of Turkey.

### **3.4 The Transformation in the Ottoman Land Regime**

#### **3.4.1 The Traditional Ottoman Land Regime: Centralization through Diversity**

The Ottoman state is conventionally characterized by its high level of centralisation (Kunt 1983)<sup>29</sup>, which nevertheless retained a relatively high level of local autonomy. In order to detail this specific social structure, the following section will first briefly outline the Empire's mode of 'soft' conquest, its mode of reproduction and the kind of provincial structure this produced. This is important, as many explanations focus on the ethno-linguistic variety of the 'Sick Man of Europe' as *the* reason for his decline. However, as the following will show, the management of diversity was at the heart of the Ottoman structure. This will reveal that, contrary to the view of the 'despotic other' or the big anomaly illegitimately superimposing a stationary 'Asiatic Mode of Production' on to naturally 'dynamic' societies, the late Ottoman Empire was a social formation which had many similarities to European development. Whilst Perry Anderson is right to state that there was no formal institution of feudalism, we can observe the development of locally and regionally increasingly autonomous power-centres at least from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

In the most general of terms, the Ottoman polity was structured according to a binary model as a result of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century conquests, which necessitated a compromise between the settling of nomads and a strong central administration inherited from the Byzantine predecessor (İnalçık 1956, 1964; Mardin 1969). The central organs of surplus-extraction were the so-called *timars* which were small landholdings and the *sanjaks* as administrative districts with a local governor, a so-called *bey*, as their head. The *Re'aya* (direct producers) were not tied to the land in the same way they were in Europe as "it was, in fine, the Sultan's will alone that decided a man's status in society" (İnalçık 1964: 44). Equally, all ownership of land lay with the sultan and land-use was, consequently, granted at most for a lifetime to the quasi-lord, the *timariot*. On top of the rent payable in kind, the timar-holder had to

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<sup>29</sup> Kunt contends that the period of actual centralization the Empire was famous for, was in fact relatively short.

provide military service to the Sultan. “As a rule *sipâhis* (cavalrymen) who composed the main force of the Ottoman army were given timars in the villages throughout the newly conquered country” (İnalcık 1956: 107). Property could neither be accumulated (other than by the Sultan himself) nor inherited, thus ensuring the unchallenged power-base of the Sultan. The maintenance of this power base was the main responsibility of the local *bey* administrators, who were only answerable to the Sultan directly. They had to control and enforce a strictly regulated tax regime which tightly fixed the level of surplus-extraction from the peasants. The ideological base of this land-regime could be found in Islamic law, or the holy order of the *Şeriat*. Thus, even though there were several categories of land-ownership, which also provided the *ulema* (the clergy, consisting of *medrese* teachers, kadi judges and imams) with holdings, like *waqf* land, the Sultan retained a divine, not only political, but also economic authority onto which the whole socio-political fabric was based and which eventually also provided the foundation for the defence of his empire. The beys tried to maintain a delicate local balance of power: “As part of Istanbul’s effort to prevent the growth of autonomous structures in the provinces, [the governor] sought to create more effective checks and balances among local notables, Janissary garrisons, Bedouins, and tribes” (Quataert 2000: 104). This policy of keeping the periphery relatively powerless by implementing a system of checks and balances had ensured the maintenance of a tight control on taxation and income throughout the periphery, whilst at the same time upholding a precarious balance of power between direct producers and (temporary) overlords. It provided social as well as fiscal stability and the *sipâhi* cavalry, together with the infamous Janissary slave soldiers, provided the backbone of Ottoman military might. This socio-economic structure prevented the constitution of a hereditary semi-feudal local ruling class with a power-base independent of the centre, as “the ‘*askeri* [ruling class] were not an aristocratic class with historically established rights, but membership of it was contingent upon the will of the sultan” (İnalcık 1956: 112). This is how the conventionally held assumption about the absence of feudalism in Ottoman lands was substantiated.<sup>30</sup>

The socio-historical importance of the association of land tenure with military service cannot be overstated. On the one hand, this meant that land ownership was contingent upon the physical ability to, at least indirectly, control and police. On the

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<sup>30</sup> For an overview on the debate on the existence of Ottoman or ‘Turkish’ feudalism, see Berktaş (1987)

other hand, it meant that an increase in revenue was largely conditional upon territorial conquest, a striking similarity to feudal Europe, which also provides the governing idea regarding assumptions about the unilinear histories of decline. While the Siphai's right to usurp surpluses was contingent upon his military performance, direct producers, or reaya, had a centrally enforced hereditary usufruct rights to the land. In this context, as opposed to many claims by Balkan national historians, direct producers could be either Muslim or Christian, whereas military service was reserved to Muslims, even though it should be added that the possibility of conversion to Islam existed. However, *timars* were not just the formal conduits through which geopolitical accumulation took place by providing militarily successful men with land holdings as rewards. They could also be obtained by newly conquered local rulers, subject to appropriate fees payable to Ottoman officials and at least informally subject to conversion to Islam: "The Ottomans preserved to a great extent the land-holding rights of these [conquered] people in the form of timar or bashtina. Thus, the great families of the Balkans, for example, (Seigneurs, Voyvods) frequently retained the greater part of their patrimonies as great Ottoman timar-holders, and when they adopted Islam they took the title of *bey* and were eligible for attaining the highest administrative posts" (İnalcık 1956: 115). As a result, Ottoman rule in the conquered, culturally 'different' parts, left the social structures, if not untouched, largely intact. "While they introduced their own administrative system they continued to work mainly through existing leaders" (Sugar 1977: 237). For these local leaders, on the other hand, "the *timar* system did not necessarily mean a revolutionary change in the former social and economic order [of the newly acquired territories]. It was in fact a conservative reconciliation of local conditions and classes with Ottoman institutions which aimed at gradual assimilation" (İnalcık 1956: 103). The rationale behind this form of conquest was, of course, not limited to extracting bribes in exchange for new positions as an additional source of revenue. Indeed, merging the Ottoman land-regime with existing social hierarchies provided the Ottomans with a very efficient and cost-effective system of governance in the periphery. Surprisingly, even the newly co-opted landlords could benefit from their own defeat in this way: This "slow process of integration of the different elements in the conquered lands by one unified centralist administration under an absolute ruler" (İnalcık 1956: 122), also provided the existing Balkan landlords with many advantages over the insecurities of constantly contested feudal sovereignty or Arab nomadic territorial instability that had preceded the arrival of the Ottomans. "Seeing that their position and lands were

effectively guaranteed by the strong Ottoman administration, the majority of these Christian soldiers might not have been averse to the change” (İnalçık 1956: 115). The Ottoman social formation, far from constituting the famously discussed Oriental Despotism (Wittfogel 1957), provided for a comparatively laissez-faire regime of ‘soft’ and gradual assimilation after the outright physical occupation. This allowed for the coexistence of culturally diverse people without implying exploitative relations along cultural lines of social separation. Stavrianos sums up the sophistication of the Ottoman land regime: “Indeed, its outstanding feature was strict control of the siphais so that they could neither exploit the re’ayas [primary producers] nor defy the state. During the early years of Ottoman rule, when this timar system was in its prime, the re’ayas enjoyed security and justice. But by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the system began to break down...” (Stavrianos 2000 [1958]: 139). The breakdown of this order, its causes and consequences starting in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century had central long-term implications for the formation of, and transition to, national polities.

### **3.4.2 The Formation of the Çiftlik and the Rise of the Âyân**

Due to the deteriorating geopolitical situation in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, old forms of Ottoman rule and surplus-extraction through the *timar* system increasingly came under pressure. The significance of this historical conjuncture in which the Ottoman countryside, most notably the Balkans, underwent dramatic and major social change in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century can hardly be overstated. Indeed, these changes established the conditions for an intense and prolonged power-struggle between the countryside and the centre which was eventually pivotal to any understanding of the late Ottoman secessions. The rise of a powerful local semi-nobility, the *âyân*, and their unprecedented large landholdings, the *çiftlik*, are central developments in this regard. As has been pointed out earlier, land-regimes were pivotal for both raising revenue as well as manpower. As fiscal and military requirements were interconnected in that way, “the revenue crisis beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was exacerbated through increases in expenditures. The most important increase was in the requirements of the military” (Islamoglu and Keyder 1978: 50). The origins of this new landed nobility continue to puzzle historians. Indeed, beyond the empirical, it also fuelled a debate over the ‘feudalization’ of the Empire which stood in contradiction to the traditional Marxist analysis of the Ottoman Empire as a typically ‘Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP)’ (Keyder 1976b; Wickham 1985; Berktaş 1987; Jacoby 2008a). However,



given the high levels of regional diversity and the constant but uneven change within it, the conceptualization of the new land regime was, and continues to be, no easy task.<sup>31</sup> “The older Ottoman land regime was passing away and being replaced by one in which privately owned estates encroached on former common lands and dispossessed the peasants. The causes of the rise of these *çiflik* estates – their nature and extent – is among the most bitterly contested issues in Ottoman historiography” (Mazower 2000: 19).

The World System scholars, for example, see the formation of large estates as the result of landlords realizing new potential for generating profit within the expanding world markets. With the introduction of new crops, landlords “lured by huge potential profits from grain exports, began to increase their privileges at the expense of the direct producers” (Mouzelis 1978: 5). The historical significance of the rise of large landholdings with unprecedented rates of surplus-extraction and productivity, i.e. the commercialisation of production for a world market, in World Systems parlance, means that the Ottoman Empire ceased “to be a self-contained unit of reproduction” (Islamoglu and Keyder 1978: 53), thus making it vulnerable to the inequalities of the world market. This vulnerability was first felt by the ‘Price Revolution’, i.e. the inflationary effect of cheap Silver imports from the New World on the Ottoman economy which lead to a crisis in Ottoman finance between 1556 and 1625 (Barkan and McCarthy 1975; Kasaba 1988: 12). More importantly, the increasing penetration of the pan-Ottoman and, in particular, the Egyptian market with British cotton products, is thought to have lead to the decline of the native cotton industry which caused a shift towards the export of raw material and foodstuffs and import of high value added goods. Charles Issawi describes this process as an effective de-industrialization of the Ottoman economy, which was, however, followed by a period of re-industrialization (Issawi 1980). Thus, the Ottoman economy as a whole increasingly shifted into a disadvantageous position within the emerging global markets (Issawi 1966; cf. Eldem 2005; Eldem 2006), leaving the Ottoman economy, amongst other problems, with a significant trade imbalance. These developments constitute, therefore, *prima facie* evidence for the World Systems Theory. Hence, in

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<sup>31</sup> Chris Wickham, for example, claims that Asiatic and feudal modes were contemporaries, whereby the tax regime of the centralized despotic state was superior to the rent extracting feudal system. This observation, as accurate as it may be, nevertheless requires some modification. Even though both ‘modes’, ‘Asiatic’ (tax) and ‘Feudal’ (rent) did exist, the crucial observation is not their contemporaneous occurrence, but the competition between different social actors in the center and the periphery they represent. In other words, the tax collecting central state was neither superior nor inferior to the rent extracting feudal regime. Rather, these two regimes regime competed for surpluses.

WST parlance, the Ottoman economy ended up occupying a position in the 'periphery', while industrialized Turkey advanced into the 'semi-periphery' (Keyder 1976a; Islamoglu 2004).<sup>32</sup> This shift, in turn, generated local social transformations. The structural core-periphery relation of inequality and exploitation was thus solidified and legally codified with the introduction of the so-called 'capitulations', which in the long run not only led to the 'peripheralization', but also to a general weakness of the Ottoman polity as a whole. This process can be seen as a core factor that lead to state bankruptcy in October 1875.<sup>33</sup>

This was caused by the center's ambition to re-appropriate surpluses now on their way to the world market. Consequently, the continuing financial malaise "created contradictions which became manifest as the legal and political requirements of [a rising] merchant capital clashed with the existing institutions" (Islamoglu and Keyder 1978: 55) and eventually led to the rise of local potentates who "could add political authority to economic accumulation and as such became known as *âyâns*" (Islamoglu and Keyder 1978: 52). These new local potentates were interpreted as predecessors of a "variety of entrepreneurial, agrarian, and commercial groups [who] in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, put forth a series of demands: the *âyân* demanded feudatory rights and the later groups demanded a new rational, legal system capable of meeting the needs of the differentiated system in which they activated" (Karpas 1968: 71-72). Thus, this commercial class, in collaboration with a 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' in their service, is seen within the World Systems paradigm as the ultimate agent of social change, which should, in view of an inadequate Ottoman response to their demand, eventually lead to modernisation, 'national' fragmentation, and, hence to the 'Demise' of the Ottoman Empire (Göçek 1996).

These views on the process of the social change, however influential they might be, face some important limitations. On the one hand, external weakening was not in

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<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, within the World Systems ontology, the Ottoman Empire was always considered a peripheral economy, whereas the Republican era, having gone through a radical capitalist transformation, is usually categorized as a semi-periphery. On the 'peripheralization' of the Ottoman economy see Keyder (1987: 25f); on Turkey's status as semi-periphery see Wallerstein (1976)

<sup>33</sup> The historiography of the capitulations has suffered from economic interpretations as unequal trade agreements cementing Western European commercial penetration. Initially capitulations were not necessarily either limited to trade issues, or prescribing unequal terms, nor were they restricted to the Ottoman Empire. Capitulations entailed a whole set of rules regulating the life of foreigners within the Empire, but later also came to include trade issues. The 1838 Anglo-Ottoman Baltalimani Convention, however, matches the above mentioned descriptions as it established British commercial domination over the Ottoman Empire to which the capitulations regime eventually contributed.

the interest of the two most advanced countries, France and Britain. As Misha Glenny has pointed out,

“[it] was clearly never the conscious intention of either Britain or France to ravage Turkey by allowing the Empire to accumulate debt. Indeed, both countries were keen to preserve the Empire at all costs. But it remains true that a combination of European fiscal recklessness and Turkish profligacy played an important role in sparking off the Great Eastern Crisis” (Glenny 2000: 87).

More illuminating still, is the further trajectory of the Ottoman transformation. The social origin of the *âyân* is in fact not clear-cut:

“The origins of the *âyân*, or the *âyânlik* as the institution was called, remain obscure. [...] The first indication that the term had acquired any more specific connotations came during the Austro-Turkish war of 1638 – 99. At that time, the term *âyân* was used to refer to certain wealthy individuals, elected by the people, who acted as intermediaries between the local populace and officials of the Porte in matters of finance, taxation and military recruitment” (Sadat 1972: 346f).

This latter functional characterisation of the new landed class already points towards another way of explaining their origins: “The obsolescence of the Ottoman military apparatus became apparent during the long and inconclusive wars with Austria between 1593 and 1606. As a remedy, the central government ordered the provincial officials to form mercenary units and equip them with firearms” (Kasaba 1988: 15f). However, in order to meet the risen short-term demand for soldiers as a result of military defeats, the Porte could no longer solely rely on the cavalry of the timar-holders (*Timarlı Sypahis*) or the standing army of Janissaries (which were concentrated in and around Istanbul). As such, the Porte “ordered the provincial administrators to form mercenary units equipped with firearms” (Kasaba and Wallerstein 1983: 344), so-called *sekbân* troops. The increase of surplus extraction sometimes led to an abandonment of farms by peasants, who couldn’t afford the cash tax anymore and subsequently turned into social bandits and potential rebel armies (Sunar 1979). These mercenary troops had a significant long-term impact on the social fabric of the Ottoman state. “[W]hen unemployed, these *sekbân* troops became a menace to rural order; they practiced brigandage on their own, and demanded illegal dues and protection money from the peasants” (Kasaba 1988: 16). Thus, on the one hand, an element of social disorder was created. On the other hand, this element could, on occasions, be utilized as a readymade standing army always keen on military employment and detached from any long-term political loyalties. However, if in employment, the maintenance of these *sekbân* troops was merely the responsibility

of the local notables, and new firearm technology made it relatively cheap to equip them with low cost and versatile weaponry. As a result, local notables felt confident to be able to raise the level of taxation from direct producers, the *reayas*, with the Ottoman centre incapable of implementing a traditional tax regime. This is important insofar as the level of surplus-extraction had previously been under the tight control of the Porte through local administrators. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, these so-called *âyân*, i.e. landlords that enjoyed unprecedented independence compared to their predecessors, the timar holders, started filling these posts themselves as a self-reward for their increased military services. This led to a fortification of their local power-base which put the government into a contradictory situation between the increasing power from the countryside and an increasing need to defend the Empire externally. This dynamic had two effects, both of which are highly significant for understanding the emergence of Nationalist movements. The first effect centred on Istanbul and the infamous Janissary corps, who could serve as a short-term military remedy without having to compromise the landed regime. Traditionally their ranks had been filled by the *devşirme*,<sup>34</sup> a child levy on the Christian subjects of the Porte making the Janissaries an elite corps, unable to develop any independent social power. This, however, like the land regime changed once the Sultan became more and more dependent on their military force. Eventually, Janissaries could marry within their ranks, thereby constituting a Platonian incestuous community of guardians who vigorously preserved their vested interest until finally violently eradicated by Mahmud II in 1821.<sup>35</sup>

Secondly, and more importantly, at the end of this process stood the establishment of *de-facto*, but not *de-jure*, private property with the creation of the *çiftlik* land-holdings. This private property was supposed to have its origin in a shift in the mode of production, rather than anything political. *Çiftliks* did not only differ in terms of size, but more importantly in terms of autonomy from the Porte. Most importantly, the ability to circumvent caps on taxation set by the Ottoman state and to extract surplus from the peasants independently without the Sultan's consent as well

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<sup>34</sup> The practice of raising a child tax on the Christian subjects of the Sultan was introduced in reaction to the growing influence of notables in the military and the administration. It was, however, not applied to all Christian subjects, but only those deemed not 'ethnically' Christian like some Slavic tribes. In reality this meant that these practices were exercised arbitrarily, usually sparing the parts of the population who were influential or economically too valuable, like Jews and Armenians.

<sup>35</sup> The Janissaries' relative social autonomy is of special importance for explaining the origins of the Serb uprising. Here, the central Ottoman administration had lost control over the Janissaries and, thereby, failed to stop overexploitation and repression of the local population, which led to the uprising directed against Janissaries specifically, rather than Ottoman rule in general.

as making these landholdings, at least unofficially hereditary<sup>36</sup>, amounted to a breakdown of Istanbul's social power which had been secured for centuries by the effective non-hereditary *timar* system. It is this that created the local power-base that would eventually constitute the central pre-condition for Ottoman decline: "While the central bureaucrats could keep their representatives under some semblance of control through frequent rotation and by playing different officials against each other, there was little they could do to curb the expanding power and influence of the *âyân*" (Kasaba 1988: 151). Thus, the agents of anti-Sultanic disobedience were not an incipient commercial or even national class. Rather, they were a newly constituted seigniorial class, keen on retaining and enlarging its surpluses, possible only on the basis of the geopolitical predicaments the Porte found itself in. Surely, new sources of income were also acquired by the *âyân*s by selling produce to European as well as 'home' markets. The ultimate realisation of gains was, however, made possible much more by the politically constituted, unimpeded, higher level of surplus-extraction from the peasants based on the central state's inability of regional political control, rather than by exploiting the inequalities of markets. This is why the *âyân*'s collective interest did not consist in political and technological 'progress', but much more in stagnation and preserving the status quo.

### 3.5 Institutional Change

The beginning of the centralization and modernization of the Ottoman Empire is usually dated at 1838 when the *Gülhane Rescript* initiated the *Tanzimat* period. This obscures, however, how the Sultanate of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century had already initiated a concerted effort to modernize. In fact, similarly to China, the Ottoman Empire had always also been a bureaucratic empire, building on a long tradition of a central administration or 'Ruling Institution'. This central organization was adapted from its Roman/Byzantine predecessors as a means of establishing political control over the tribal elements in Anatolia and Rumelia (Mardin 1969: 270-272). Like the Janissaries, the bureaucracy was staffed by slaves recruited through the *devşirme*, who were bound by the concept of *beytu mali-lmuslimin*, i.e. the imperative to ensure the *Şeriat* and the public good. This meant that these professional slaves were untied from any heritable social connections, while being "at the mercy of sultanic fiat:

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<sup>36</sup> Timars had been de-facto hereditary as well; however, it was at the discretion of the Sultan to accept or reject the heir. A right he did not excessively make use of.

neither their lives nor their property were protected (Mardin 1991).” This system was intended to maintain the absolute authority of the Sultan. The bureaucracy was differentiated within the palace into “the *enderun* (‘inside’), housing the sultan, his harem and their slaves, and the *birun* (‘outside’), which housed government functions” (Findley 2006: 69). Officials were trained at the *enderun* in a bid to keep them close to the Sultan (Heper 1976: 509).

However, during the 17<sup>th</sup> century recruitment through the child levy had become “obsolete and dysfunctional” (Quataert 2005b: 99) while the central administration spilt into a variety of independent households establishing patrimonial relationships within the Palace. Şerif Mardin describes these relationships as “the most characteristic aspect of Ottoman polity” (Mardin 1969). Reproduction within this web of semi-autonomous private households depended on personal relationships and the Sultan’s influence was restricted to “arranging marriages between members of ruling elites and women from the imperial harem”, thus creating “densely webbed relationships between the dynasty and its servants” (Quataert 2005a: 101; Findley 2006: 71). Far away from establishing a rational meritocratic bureaucracy, this engendered a system of multiple rivalling palace households, where recruitment into the bureaucracy was determined primarily by hereditary rights and only secondarily (at best) by merit (Abou-El-Haj 2005: 31-32). Even though the social power of the central administration towards the periphery did not diminish and ensured constant levels of surplus-extraction from the countryside, the internal mechanisms of social reproduction within the household system in effect curtailed Sultanic power. This consequently rendered the Grand Vezir as “acting head of state” (Chambers 1964: 313: 259), as he “took the most important part of the record keeping and communication work under his own supervision and moved into new quarters separate from the Palace. The entire scribal profession became functionally differentiated” (Mardin 1991: 117).

The further development from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards was characterized by the emergence of these Pasha and Vizier Households, maintaining their social power well into the Republican era. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in a bid to raise revenue, the previously closed household system was gradually opened towards other sections of the society and recruitment was increasingly based on office venality. This had the effect of increased levels of surplus extraction by the ‘new’ bureaucracy to cover the cost of investment into office, which in turn favoured the further spread of tax

farming. Thus, a short-term raise in revenue was achieved at the expense of long-term loss of central control. By way of conclusion it can be observed, therefore, that, as opposed to the provisions of the Şeriat, “[i]t is highly improbable that at any point in Ottoman history sultans had the absolute monopoly of power...” (Abou-El-Haj 2005: 33).

Just as the Sultan could not rule independently from the wider bureaucratic structures, these developments did not occur in isolation from the Ottoman’s geopolitical environment. Preceding the concrete institutional ‘responses’ to Russian and Austrian military superiority in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a shift in the Ottoman concept of International Relations itself took place. Bounded territoriality and physical borders (as opposed to the military frontier) had previously been an alien concept to the Ottoman state. Once the “insufficiency of the Ottoman military arm as an instrument of foreign policy” had been realized (Abou-El-Haj 1967: 489), frontiers were transformed into borders and foreign relations were formalized, developing rules and regulations for co-existence instead of conquest. Thus, “the 1699 treaty of Karlowitz forced a transition in Ottoman diplomatic strategies from dictation to negotiation with equals, and the gradual rationalisation of diplomatic relations on European terms” (Aksan 2006: 107). The closure of the military frontier, thus, imposed the principle of diplomatic reciprocity on the Ottoman Empire, which led to the increasing use of *ahidname*, or ‘capitulations’, i.e. specific regimes establishing the rights and duties of foreign visitors, like pilgrims or merchants to the Ottoman Empire.

This is when the already existing scribing service within the Ottoman administration started assuming the important duty of meeting and corresponding with foreign diplomats (Findley 1980b: 57). The formalization of relations with Europe encompassed an increasing demand for interpretation and translation into European languages, most importantly French. Formulating treaties in a written form constituted a major shift from the Ottoman preference of oral agreements. In the long term, these formalizations not only had an ‘external’ effect, but also an internal one. Namely, it was this forced opening of formalized foreign relations that led to the increased staffing of the Porte’s offices with professional, multi-lingual civil servants, mostly of Christian denomination. Social change occurred on two levels, therefore. The formalization of foreign relations with the Ottoman’s immediate environment initiated the growth of scribal professionals within the structures of the pre-existing

patrimonial bureaucracy. The thus induced institutional growth was neither specifically modern nor itself necessarily coincidental with the introduction of a 'rational' administration, not least since the Janissaries and Ulema could retain their heritable positions well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, it laid the foundations for the bureaucratic elite that acted as one of the main agents of modernization in the Ottoman Empire.

### 3.6 Neo-Absolutist Restoration through Effective Modernisation

#### *Selim III*

The other agent of reform was the military. Enthroned in 1789, Sultan Selim III found himself in a similar position towards the *âyân* as Goethe's sorcerer's apprentice towards his broom: "*Die ich rief, die Geister, Werd ich nun nicht los*".<sup>37</sup> He and his indirect successor Mahmud II (1808–39) started restoring central power – a process quickly faced with resistance from within the patrimonial bureaucracy (Chambers 1964: 305-306). Thus, as Karpát argues, the entrenched social power of the households, Janissaries and the conservative Ulema combined constituted a major obstacle to reform. Social change required change first and foremost within the various administrative quarters of Istanbul itself (Karpát 1972a: 257). As a result, it can be seen as a strategic mistake by Selim to focus on the military more than the bureaucracy. His reaction can be understood both as a reaction to military weakness, especially compared to Russia and Austria, but also as an attempt to curb the social power of the morally defunct and militarily decaying Janissary slave corps (Shaw 1965: 291). Usually the Ottoman army was constituted by the *sipahi* cavalry men and Janissary slave soldiers. Selim's 'new model' standing and salaried army, or *Nizam-I Cedid*, was supposed to provide a more reliable and efficient form of defense which could re-establish the absolute power of the Sultan. This encompassed an autonomous treasury to fund the new army as well as the direct involvement of French military advisors. As funding for the new army implied the re-distribution of surpluses, it was rightly recognized as initiating the monopolization of violence and fiscal relations in the Ottoman Empire. Hence, the *Nizam-I Cedid* reforms threatened vested interests in Istanbul and the periphery alike. Due to this agenda to transform the traditional Ottoman structures of social power, resistance rose from notables and Janissaries who deposed Selim in 1807 and destroyed the new corps.

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<sup>37</sup> Spirits that I've cited/My commands ignore



### *Mahmud II*

While Selim fell victim to his own ambitions, Mahmud II successfully carried out the destruction of the major contenders for power and physically destroyed the Janissaries in what could be called an Ottoman ‘night of the long knives’ in 1826. Equally, he started challenging the *âyân* from 1815 onwards, even though they could not be removed as easily as the Janissaries. As opposed to Selim’s focus on the military, Mahmud’s main target for reform was palace education, with the intention to change the patrimonial bureaucracy. Again, foreign relations played a major part in the transformation of the latter. In the 1790’s Selim III had already installed permanent diplomatic missions in London, Vienna, Berlin, and Paris. These intensifying diplomatic relations are often understood as the prime channel of Westernization whereby “prolonged exposure to modern ideas and values” leads to an appreciation and understanding of these new values by the bureaucratic agents in question, thus initiating social change from above (Chambers 1964: 311).

While this might be true to the extent that change was initiated from a bureaucratic class hovering ‘above’ society, this reading neglects the Sultan’s agency and his desire to restore central power rather than endorsing Western values. Mahmud was aware that “without checks on his power, that is without the Janissary corps, the *ayans* and through them the *ulema*, the sultan himself became an absolute ruler” (Karpát 1972a: 254). Thus, instead of understanding bureaucratic reform as an intent step towards realizing ‘Western values’, centralization decreased the potential for political contention and established a quasi-Absolutist regime. Comparable to the Absolutist restoration of the Kingly powers in France, centralizing social power initially served the purpose of restoring the Sultan’s exclusive control over his realm in conjuncture with building geopolitically more competitive military structures. Mahmud’s and Selim’s efforts are, therefore, best understood as a form of neo-Absolutist restoration of Sultanic glory overcoming rivals for power in the periphery and the center alike.

The impetus for modernization did not, therefore, emanate from a growing civil society seeking more efficient and market friendly forms of political administration. Rather, it was the barrier to effective state control they constituted that made modernization as a means of challenging their social positions an imperative for asserting central power.

### *The Tanzimat*

Instead of Mahmud's and Selim's incomplete reform efforts, many accounts of Ottoman modernization start with the Tanzimat (Price 1956: 70 - 81; Weiker 1968). This is accurate to the extent that the 1839 Gülhane Rescript did initiate the most radical reforms. Most importantly, this included the introduction of an Ottoman citizenship law in 1856 and the 1858 *Arazi Kanunnamesi* Land Code which established a form of private property rights commensurate with the Sharia.<sup>38</sup> One fundamental difference between the earlier modernization attempts by Selim and Mahmud is the central agency of the now transforming bureaucracy during the Tanzimat period. While it had been Selim and Mahmud's desire to replace the households with more loyal as well as better-educated elites, one unintended consequence of their reforms was that some of these elites had started shifting their loyalty to an abstract ideal of the state (Findley 2006: 80). Thus, while geopolitical circumstances forced the administration to react to the military weakness of the Empire, once trained in the art of statecraft, bureaucrats equally constituted a considerable force for further-reaching change. Thus politicized, the bureaucracy started assuming not only an 'instrumental', but also a 'substantive' kind of rationality. It propelled social transformation itself in opposition to the traditional social structures it had previously defended (Heper 1976: 511).

### *The Young Ottomans*

One specific administrative organ developed into the heart and soul of the modernization movement, namely the *Tercüme Odası* or Translation Bureau. Foreign relations were increasingly conducted by Muslim, professional salaried officials from 1833, since the Greek Dragoman interpreters who had traditionally staffed the Empire's foreign service were suspected of sympathies with the Greek revolt. It was this translation bureau which constituted the social foundation of the 'Young Ottoman' and, combined with military and medical academies, the 'Young Turk'

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<sup>38</sup> The *Arazi Kanunnamesi* Land Code maintained the legal prescripts of the Ottoman kanun, which *de-jure* ruled out private ownership of land, as, according to the Şeriat, all land belongs to God. Despite being conservative in its legal nature, the reform initiated a gradual *de-facto* liberalisation of old Ottoman land titles, including legalising the sale and inheritance of deeds. Moreover, deeds were for the first time centrally registered at the *defterhane* land registry. Notably, the reform's aim to centralize the land regime, to promote peasant ownership of land and to strengthen the empire's tax base was not achieved as many local notables and sheiks successfully used the new legal instruments for usurping much of the land. For a detailed description see Karpas (1968: 86-90).

movements.<sup>39</sup> Thus, long before the Turkish state formation was successful, the personalized rule of the Sultan and the traditional patrimonial bureaucracy was undermined from within the Translation bureau.

### *Ottomanism*

This new bureaucracy also launched the citizenship law of 1869. This project, referred to as *Ottomanism*, intended to install a universal form of popular sovereignty creating for the first time formally and legally equal rights independent of religious denomination as part of the Tanzimat reforms. While frequently described as merely a product of Western diplomatic lobbying and political pressure, this law was nevertheless implemented by an indigenous, yet Western educated bureaucracy. However, as the core emphasis in the so-called Hatt-i-Humayun was on a process of ‘emulation’ and the “formal, mechanical and institutional aspects of transformation” (Mardin 1962: 5; Karpas 1972b), it soon faced opposition from disaffected Moslems. More precisely, it fuelled a schism between technocratic reformers and liberal Islamic intellectuals that had already occurred at the beginning of the Tanzimat period when some of the reformers fell out with the Tanzimat’s eminent leaders, Ali Pasha and Fuat Pasha. These ‘technocrats’ focussed on a ‘Realpolitik’ reaction to geopolitical necessities, the recovery of political and fiscal control, without at the same time implementing any form of popular representation. However, the reform process did not only generate a technocratic bureaucracy under Reşit Paşa and reformist army generals, but also led to the emergence of an Ottoman intelligentsia and ultimately enriched the Ottoman intellectual life in more unique ways than emulating Western concepts. In other words, the Ottoman reform movement cannot just be read as a constant process of more or less passive adaptation, but is also the result of “local Turkish developments which were only indirectly the product of Western influence” (Mardin 1962: 8).

This local agency is, thus, recognizable first and foremost in the constitution of a more self-conscious Ottoman reform movement, the Young Ottomans. Dissatisfied with the superficial character of the Tanzimat for having remained essentially authoritarian in political style and strengthening mostly the Sultan’s control over taxable resources, the Young Ottomans were concerned with the introduction of further-reaching reforms like a truly representative government, the

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<sup>39</sup> For a comprehensive account of the Young Ottomans see Mardin (1962); for the Young Turks, or the Committee for Union and Progress, see Zürcher (1984)

rule of law and modern citizenship. It was from within this group, which also refused to recognize any progressive character in the nationalist movements that demands for a further-reaching transformation within the Ottoman borders emerged. This demand for reform also applied to political identity. Hence, rather than passively imposing a Western legal concept, the Young Ottoman's adaptation had in fact generated an interesting synthesis between European citizenship and the Ottoman Şariat: *Ottomanism*.

The citizenship law established for the first time formally and legally equal rights for all Ottoman subjects. The concept of Ottomanism was intended to sustain this new legal institution with the creation of a non-national, cosmopolitan Ottoman political identity. Significantly though, this reformed, universal political identity was not thought of in terms of an ethno-linguistically homogenous population. For the Young Ottomans, Ottomanism appeared to conform with the ideals of French Republican universalism, explicitly rejecting Turkism (Karpas 2000). This identity based on the name of a ruling dynasty simply denoted a territorial demarcation of political subjectivity, instead of an ethnic, religious or linguistic identification. It even led to a short-lived constitutional period from 1876 to 1878 and the first Ottoman parliament. However, while in principle true to universalism, it still needed to incorporate Islamic elements. In other words, it interpreted the Şariat in terms of a liberal and quasi-democratic political philosophy. This attempt to reconcile "twentieth century liberalism with seventh-century Islam (...) no doubt involved some very unorthodox reinterpretation of Islamic concepts, but [had] been accepted (...) by nineteenth and twentieth century intellectuals throughout the world of Islam" (Zurcher 1984: 6).

#### *The Catastrophe of 1877/78 and the Hamidian Restoration*

Like many other Ottoman transformations, the end of the Young Ottoman's reformist aspirations came in the form of military defeat during the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish war. The greatest impact on the ambitions of Ottomanism was the end of the Empire in the Balkans. Having suffered military defeat that led to significant territorial losses, not only to the rising Christian Balkan states, but also to Britain (Cyprus), Sultan Abdülhamid II abandoned constitutionalism and dissolved Parliament. Surrounded by expanding Christian states and anxious about European colonial aspirations, Abdülhamid II consolidated his absolutist restoration by engaging in a discourse of pan-Islamism in order to preserve the remainder of the now largely Muslim

population of the empire into a coherent state. Despite the fact that the Ottoman Empire was – yet again – saved from Russian designs by a decisive British intervention, it was the specific outcome of this geopolitical encounter that also led to the restoration of the Caliphate – if merely in rhetoric terms (cf. Karpas 2001: 136-138).

Thus strengthened, the Islamic identity inherent in Ottomanism was itself not necessarily conducive to political unity among Moslems due to the variety of sectarian understandings of Islam present within the Empire. While Christians were guaranteed minority rights, Moslems were expected to adopt one single Sunni mainstream interpretation. This constituted a shift insofar as local government as well as Islam were previously not subject to state control, whereas Ottomanism attempted to homogenize Islam through the same uniform Sunni reading guarded by the Turkish Republic to this day. Even though all of these developments dealt a striking blow to the spirit of the Young Ottomans, the newly assertive Sultan had tried to accommodate them by deploying them within the growing system of education. This led to a gradual infiltration of reformist ideology via schools and universities, notably the Galatasaray school now headed by one of the eminent Young Ottomans, Ali Suavi. While it is true that Abdülhamid engaged in a discourse of pan-Islamism aiming to reaffirm identification of an increasingly disaffected Muslim majority with the Ottoman state, it is nevertheless worth noting that his institutional reforms were further reaching than the Tanzimat, a fact sometimes obscured by his seemingly reactionary Islamic authoritarian style (Shaw 1976; Shaw and Shaw 1977).

### *The Young Turks*

Irrespective of some historical and philosophical continuities, the next generation of reformers were quite disparate in character compared to the Young Ottomans. The transformation from Young Ottomans to Young Turks was, therefore, more than in name. The Young Turks remained, according to Karpas, still “dedicated Ottomanists” keen to preserve internal unity across the Middle East in an age of constant secessions (Karpas 2000: 25). Initially, their main concern was with organizing resistance against Hamidian neo-Absolutism. The first organized opposition group was established in the Military Medical College, when four students founded the *İttihad-i Osmani Cemiyeti* (Ottoman Unity Society). This transformed into the Salonici ‘domestic’ movement which was founded in 1906 as *Osmanlı Hürriyet Cemiyeti* (Ottoman Freedom Society) while an exile movement, the Committee for Union and Progress,

formed in Geneva around the same time. Their forces combined in the famous 1908 revolt which led to the re-constitution of parliament and the restoration of the 1867 constitution.

Like with the Young Ottomans, it is difficult to delimit the intellectual remit of the Young Turk movement as it went through various transformations. While generally more defensive in character, due to its social origins in an officer class, the term 'union' in its name referred to the unity of the (ethnic) elements, upholding the ideals of Ottomanism. As Kayali and others have pointed out, the conventional understanding of the CUP as an agent of Turkish nationalism in reaction to which Arab nationalism developed, is therefore based on a misperception, which underestimates the degree to which the CUP remained loyal to a belief in uniformity of all Ottoman subjects (Kayali 1997). That the CUP already engaged in a process of 'Turkification' is, according to Kayali, a wide-spread historical myth targeted at the Ottoman government by its internal and external enemies which happened to be invigorated by mainstream Turkish and Middle Eastern historiography (Kayali 1997: 82f). Even the eminent authority on the Young Turks, Erik J. Zürcher calls the CUP "ardent Ottoman nationalists" (Zurcher 1984: 22). Generally though a distinction can be made between the exiled Ottoman intellectuals who understood national unity to include different ethnicities and the officer corps, which had either not problematized the issue at all, or had planned to subordinate it under a wider state-building rationale, namely through the process of 'Ottomanization' (i.e. homogenisation of some sort) of minorities.

#### *The Slow Death of Ottomanism*

This objective gradually evolved into a different form of modernization from the Tanzimat's initial plans for a Union of the peoples (ittihadi anasir), since the agents of modernisation themselves were, for the first time, of an ethno-linguistic and religiously more homogenous origin. More important still was their social background. They were no longer the bureaucrats and intellectuals of the Tanzimat and the Young Ottoman movement, but graduates from army schools, who should ultimately become the cradles of the Republic. The most profound impact on their actions was yet again through military defeat on the Balkans. Losing the 1912-13 Balkan War had a deeply demoralizing effect on the Young Turks, not only because, like so many wars before that, it ended in defeat and loss of territory, but primarily because the defeat was inflicted on them at the hands of former Ottoman provinces.

Their victory was convincing evidence that a kind of nationalism similar to the ones on the Balkans held the only promise for salvation. Thus, the preservation of independence against the threat of potential colonization was given priority over the inclusion of non-Muslim elements within the modernized state. As a result, the Young Turk's overarching goal was not the territorial preservation of the Empire anymore, but the military fortification of the Anatolian rump state. Even though this process of 'Turkification' had, irrespective of their name, not been the Young Turk's original intention, they increasingly focussed on the Anatolian heartland and, thereby, paved the way for the more exclusive and restrictive project of Turkish nationalism.<sup>40</sup>

Important insights can be gained from a historical sociology of the new administrative class at the Porte and its role in the social transformations. As the multiple and meaningful transformations within this class has shown though, this cannot amount, as Weberians argue, to a meaningful explanation in its own right for the social change that took place. Equally, the explanatory power of an intellectual penetration by enlightenment philosophy is usually overstated. I.E. Petrosyan, for example, appears to be convinced that the origins of Westernization in the Ottoman Empire lie in the dissemination of Western philosophy, rather than Ottoman social relations (Petrosyan 1980). The internal and geopolitical power struggles that generated the expansion and transformation of these elites question how far European political philosophy can serve as a meaningful explanation for change, instead of being a symptom of it. As was argued, Ottoman institutional innovations were primarily triggered by the stark necessity of containing peripheral power which constituted at the same time a major obstacle to, as well as a great incentive for, political reforms. Thus, the origin of impersonal rational bureaucracy lies not so much in the ideational appeal of 'modern' European thought (Göçek 1987), but in the *forced* commencement of formal external relations the closure of the military frontier had implied and the subsequent evolution of social conflicts (Abou-El-Haj 1967; Abou-el-Haj 1969; Findley 1972). The European enlightened modernizers and their philosophies were, just like the reactionaries within Istanbul and the periphery, a product of, as Hamid Enayat put it, "European military, economic, and cultural encroachments since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century [since it was only then] that Muslim

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<sup>40</sup> Among the most important intellectual origins of Turkish Nationalism are the political pamphlets by Ziya Gökalp (1959), see also Parla (Parla 1985).

elites started to write separate works on specifically political topics" (Enayad 2005: 3).

Thus, initially, in a comparable way to Neo-Absolutism in Europe, modernisation in the Ottoman context is best understood as a means of restoring Sultanic power. While the means with which the restoration of Sultanic power was carried out are borrowed from administrative, technological and military advances of Europe, this was not founded upon an ideological conviction, but rather caused by the needs of dynastic restoration. However, this dynasty retained its distinctly pre-modern character (i.e. personal political relations of the Ottoman polity) until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Only once this bureaucratic class developed a sense of *Realpolitik*, did it transform into a proactive agent of change advancing the de-personalization of social relations and ultimately the separation of political from economic relations.

It is not suggested here, however, that the Tanzimat can be read as a clean watershed between pre-modern and modern rule. The gradual evolution of an understanding of *Realpolitik* within parts of the Ottoman administration does not imply that a *Primat der Aussenpolitik* had been established as a new universal Ottoman foreign policy overnight. *Raison d'état* thinking only gradually effected actual state policies. Personal interests of the members of the court, the bureaucracy and other forms of vested interests continued to prevent the operation of 'pure reason'. Since 'external' relations continued to be dominated by a plurality of social forces, "the decision-making process in 'foreign policy' appears to be very diffuse" (Faroghi 2004: 7). Hence, the most significant drive for reform was the unprecedented loss of revenue and political control over the provinces, which was both effect and cause of the Ottoman's geopolitical predicament. In other words, reform was not merely the means of choice for meeting a *new* challenge, but has to be understood as growing out of an attempt to restore the social power and property of the Sultanate.

### **3.7 From 'Periphery' to 'Nation'?**

While it is not very contentious to argue that bureaucratic reform did not equal social change, it is the converse argument about the various secessions representing a necessary break with this tradition, that this study takes issue with. On the other hand, this raises the question as to what degree we can actually ascribe explanatory power



to the whole process of modernisation for the eventual creation of *national* states, as opposed to simply modern and centralized states. Wehler's concept of defensive modernisation could conceptualize the process of Ottoman centralization very well. However, it cannot account for the transformation as a whole since it equally fails to account for the emergence of successor states and secessionist movements and especially for their national character. Filling this gap, the following section will analyse the link between the rise of local notables and nationalist movements.

As one authority on the rise of local notables observes, the Sultan's and the bureaucracy's centralization agenda was, "obviously, (...) well designed to offend every vested interest in the realm, and the results were predictable" (Sadat 1972: 359). Initially at least, the Porte's attempt, thus, triggered a consolidation of provincial power.

"The results were to encourage the feudality to greater excesses. The *âyân*, although never formally organized, began to act as a corporate entity, taking collective action against any attempt of the government to violate the status quo. The Janissaries of Rumeli openly revolted and defeated a regiment of the new troops sent against them; and both *âyân* and Janissary *Agas* hired gangs of brigands and mercenary soldiers to terrorize and dominate the countryside" (Sadat 1972: 360).

It is indeed interesting to note that the establishment of an independent Greek state marked the first successful nationalist project - only three years after the Sultanate had started to seriously challenge local notables who "owed most of their wealth and influence to the fiscal and administrative anarchy that reigned in the Ottoman Empire" (Kasaba 1988: 85). Thus, nationalist projects seem to have emerged only in response to the attempt to bring this power struggle to an end, i.e. to endanger the social power-base as well as substantial sources of income. İnalçık points towards this coincidence more explicitly: "In 1812, nevertheless, immediately after the conclusion of the peace treaty with Russia, Mahmud began to suppress the principal *âyân* in the provinces" (İnalçık 1964: 53-54).

In and of itself this does not amount to evidence about an intrinsic link between nationalist movements and seigneurial coalitions of landlords trying to escape the re-enforced Ottoman tax-collector. Firstly, coincidences do not necessarily establish causal links. Secondly, the vast lands of the Ottoman Empire are much too diverse to advance such an all-encompassing claim in the first place. A more crucial observation is to be made about the ensuing conflict between a centralizing Ottoman state and

peripheral power holders. This center-periphery struggle created social contradictions ultimately preparing the ground for secessionist struggles. Arguably, their nationalist character was due to instrumental, rather than genuine ‘ethnic’ or ‘racial’ reasons. As Sadat observes for the Serb case, rather than the seigniorial regime itself acting as an agent of nationalism, “it was this seigniorial reaction which led to the rearming of the Serbs and of the Greek *armatoloi*, and it was this reaction which provoked the Serbs into revolution” (Sadat 1972: 360).<sup>41</sup> Thus, for Sadat, instead of the *âyân* themselves providing the irredentist power-base, their reaction to the centralisation efforts by the Porte produced contradictions in the social fabric that lead to new struggles as a result of which novel political ideologies took hold. The only possible generic conclusion in a realm as diverse as the Ottoman lands is that the power-struggles emerging from a combination of geopolitical challenges and social contradictions is ultimately the *conditio sine qua non* for any attempt to explain national secessions in the Balkans and the Middle East.

### 3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that historical materialist explanations of Ottoman Decline have rightly emphasized the importance of 1683 and the end of territorial expansion as a crucial turning point in Ottoman history. However, they have failed to give adequate attention to the social dialectic this stalling of conquest has generated. Socio-economically, the end of expansion led to the breakdown of the traditional Ottoman land regime, initiating a process of ‘feudalization’ and the emergence of a landed aristocracy. In contrast, the end of expansion formalized Ottoman social relations with European states, gradually transforming the Ottoman bureaucratic structures in Istanbul, fuelling a competitive dynamic between two institutionalized ‘cultures’ within the Ottoman Empire. The first “may be called the culture of the Palace, the second that of the provinces” (Mardin 1969: 270). The intensified competition between these two social forces developed into what Şerif Mardin and Metin Heper have recognized as a continuous center-periphery conflict which is ‘Key to Turkish Politics’ (Mardin 1969; Mardin 1973b; Heper 1980).

While the external challenges of geopolitical competition and the development of world markets created a situation which led to the rise of these internal challenges, it was only the resulting social dynamic itself that led to the crucial social

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<sup>41</sup> The argument is more explicitly made by Leopold von Ranke about the Serbian revolt (1848).

transformations preceding the national secessions. Thus, this dynamic did not develop or mature during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but had been growing previously. This does not mean, however, that local notables can be identified as agents of nationalism per se, as might have been the case elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> However, even if local notables themselves did not become champions of National revolt (and sometimes they did as the example of Ali Pasha of Janina shows), the social conflict between a modernizing Ottoman central state and various centres of autonomy is nevertheless crucial for comprehending the subsequent 'nationalist' struggles.

A deterministic, linear narrative of Imperial Decline obscures these important developments triggered by specific agents and relegates them to inevitable events all attributable to the same all-encompassing modernizing pressure. Such an approach is always substantiated either by a primordial understanding of nationalities, or fails to provide a specific explanation for the *process* of nation-formation beyond the fact *that* it took place. Inside/Outside distinctions instead of being understood as historically evolving, instable and mutating, socially, discursively as well as politically constructed categories, assume a pre-political, primordial quality. Not only space but also time is 'nationalised' in this manner. A pre-emptive comparative approach is adopted that builds on pre-conceived notions of ethno-linguistic difference which prevent us from comprehending the tumultuous, non-linear and incomplete historical trajectory of the Ottoman lands into geo-political modernity. It has been shown that the developments leading to Ottoman disintegration cannot be conceptualized as a unilinear narrative of decline, naturally culminating in the formation of Nation-states. Rather, they are best understood as a unique process of social transformation that is not solely explicable in terms of a large-scale trajectory towards 'modernity'.

The following chapter will attempt to overcome these shortcomings by providing a historical reconstruction of this transformation that locates the Greek secession within the dialectic struggle between a centralizing state in Istanbul and the semi-feudal regimes in the Ottoman periphery. This will explain how the breakdown of the traditional social fabric of the Ottoman Empire led to the secession of the Modern Greek state. As a result, it will be shown that national secession did not

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<sup>42</sup> The anti-Habsburg Hungarian National movement of 1848 is a telling example. However, this does not allow for an argument, amongst others made by Sandra Halperin, for the uniformly noble origin of Nationalist struggles (Halperin 1997: Chapter 3). While it is true that Nationalism is not inherently incompatible with the interests of the Ancient Regime, it is equally problematic to locate the Ancient Regime as the unique social origin of Nationalism.

indicate a decisive break between pre-modern and modern sovereignty in southeastern Europe.

## 4 Liberation from the Yoke or Preservation of the Old Regime?

### The Greek 'Revolution from Outside'

*'Between slavery and slavery there is no difference. To make a revolution and overthrow the yoke, you did nothing. That is what '21 did. To not fall back under the yoke - that is revolution.'*

*Skarimbass (1995)*

*"I may be Greek now, but I was practically a Turk then, and I'm not ashamed of it either, and I'm not the only one, and this country's full of people like me!"*

*Louis de Bernières (2004)*

### 4.1 Introduction

Previously, we have identified the problem of naturalizing national secession as if it represented a 'normalisation' rather than disruption of sovereignty, and, by extension, international relations. However, a large body of literature within International Relations and historical sociology is indeed dedicated to the problem of disruptions, or 'anomalies'. These are, however, conventionally identified as social revolutions.<sup>43</sup> As with nationalism, there exists a considerable body of literature on this topic within wider social theory (if not necessarily within IR). However, the same cannot be said about what is conventionally understood as a sub-type of revolution: national secessionist struggles.<sup>44</sup> These are usually theorized either within a 'revolution' or 'nationalism' paradigm, simply denoting the territorial outcome of a social transformation which has its origins elsewhere. This appears to be the explanation most commonly applied to the Greek case as well, whereby a 'national' revolt brought about social change by disposing of the Ottoman overlord. Within this paradigm, Turkish/Muslim equals exploitative landowning class and Greek/Orthodox Christian equals exploited direct producers. As will be shown in the following, these

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<sup>43</sup> To name but a few: Halliday (1999b), Panah (2002), Skocpol (1979), Trimberger (1978), Walt (1996)

<sup>44</sup> As Linda Bishai reminds us "secession is one of the richest veins yet to be mined in International Relations" (Bishai 2006: 2). Apart from her own work there are indeed only a few dedicated reflections on secession within IR, see also Barktus (1999). Barktus uses a rational choice model, where unified rational actors conduct a cost/benefit analysis. As will be shown below, this framework is hardly applicable to the complex and highly differentiated social fabric of the Greek secession. See also Meadwell (1999). Meadwell deals with this problematique only from a post-1945 perspective, where the right to national self-determination had entered the discourse within the post-colonial 'international society'. This was not the case for the period covered by this chapter, i.e. the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

distinctions are not as clear cut as the prevailing understanding of the Greek secession makes us believe. There is a continuing debate whether “the Greek liberation movement in the 1820’s [was] strictly a War of Independence from Ottoman rule or was it also a social revolution” (McGrew 1976: 111). In other words, do we have to make a distinction between an independence struggle and a ‘Revolution’? The logic, or as Viva Ona Bartkus put it, the ‘Dynamic of Secession’ (Bartkus 1999) does not necessarily lead to or is coincidental with a wider social dynamic towards change that equals a revolution. Hence, do we, as William W. McGrew seems to suggest, have to enlarge our theoretical toolkit in order to accommodate the kind of social change that involves territorial change? An answer to this question remains pertinent, for despite the broad reception of critical theories of nationalism, 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalist secessions are nevertheless understood in most IR literature as a step towards universalizing ‘modern’ sovereignty emanating from the British/French ‘Dual Revolution’ (Hobsbawm 1962). In consequence, the principle of national self-determination, prominent with Liberal (Woodrow Wilson) and Marxist (Stalin 1912; Lenin 1972) political theory alike, was universalised. The implication is always that national secessions equal revolutions, themselves epitomizing social change. This equally applies to the kind of change that is genuinely popular, or ‘from below’, as well as to the social change ‘from above’ imposed by bureaucratic professional cadres. Either reading of this history emphasizes the transforming capacity of the new Western European socio-political order. Social change, thus, comes about due to the ideological and economic appeal of the Enlightenment, modernity and/or capitalism and the French Revolution. In the conservative reading of this history, any secession is an epiphenomenon of wider social changes, which means that the Greek secession came about as a result of - a usually unexplained - “concentric diffusion” (Canefe 2004: 110) of a totality of a new social order that necessarily involved a nationalization of territory by means of secession from the Ottoman Empire. In other words, secession was triggered by ‘revolutionary’ agents, who were “...influenced by the European Enlightenment”. Hence, “the Greek revolutionaries endeavoured from the outset to create a modern state embodying the liberal ideas of the West” (Michalidis 2006: 155).

Relating this to the social history of the Balkans invokes some questions as to how this universalization of Western and liberal forms of social organization should have taken place at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Firstly, there is a mismatch between the Christian identity of the revolutionaries and the strong social power of

the prevalent Orthodox religion and culture in the region, which did not only peacefully co-exist, but constituted a central institution of Ottoman rule. Secondly, there are the various attempts by the same European Powers from where these new kinds of social order supposedly originated, to preserve the Ottoman Empire, which was grounded in both the post-Napoleonic spirit of ‘restoration’ as well as the conscious maintenance of the Pax Ottomanica.<sup>45</sup> It still remains unclear exactly where “the spark that ignited the war of independence and the subsequent establishment of a nation-state endowed with institutions owing their origin to the French Revolution” (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2002: 3) had come from and how it could possibly be so successful under these circumstances.

Given the variety of unanswered questions surrounding the Greek Question, this chapter will challenge widely accepted assumptions about the national naturalization of political space through secession from the Ottoman Empire. It will firstly aim at providing a counter-narrative to the above mentioned history of naturalizing the national as the modern form of rule. In doing so, the central concern of this chapter does not lie with denying the role of Western European influence and the connection to wider geopolitical transformations, as such, but much more with shifting the attention away from a narrative of an automatism of universalization towards the complex, but also backward and conservative nature of the Greek secession in particular. It will be shown that Greek society, prior to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, did not develop in opposition to Ottoman rule, but as a central part of it. Nationalism penetrated the social fabric from far afield, but not in the form of a direct implementation of Western European ideals. The crucial part of the explanation lies within the relations of the local social structures and a modernizing Ottoman center. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that, at least in its initial phases, vested interests were preserved, rather than successfully challenged by the Greek secession. I will secondly argue that, at least in this case, a conceptual distinction between social revolution and secession is not only merited, but imperative on the grounds that even though social revolutions sometimes do express themselves in territorial re-configuration(s) of political space, this does not constitute a necessary and causal relation. Nor, in fact, can this be applied in the reverse. In other words, secessions, or the overthrow of a sometimes distant central/imperial government, do not per se indicate meaningful social change, as long as local social structures remain in place or at least unchallenged.

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<sup>45</sup> For a detailed discussion see chapter 5

In the following section, this argument will be developed towards the backdrop of the struggle for Greek national secession from 1821-1833. In doing so, this chapter will first look at the most established perception of Greek nationalism from the perspective of what is called here the Hellenic 'liberation paradigm'. The majority of conservative nationalist historiography of Greece (Petropoulos 1968; Clogg 1973; Woodhouse 1977; Clogg 1979, 1992; Koliopoulos and Veremis 2002) presents the Greek uprising as a form of 'liberation' from the 'Ottoman yoke' whose "advocates of dynamic action to overthrow Ottoman rule in the Greek lands were much influenced by the revolutionary doctrines of the French Revolution" (Clogg 1979: 43). The established Greek historiography appears to rely on the idea of a bourgeois revolution, or at least allocates a central role in the Greek nationalist project to the merchant bourgeoisie. This argument is congruent with the absence of an educated critical mass amongst the largest part of the population, the direct producers (Mouzelis 1978: 12), who were traditionally interested in the strong control of landowners Ottoman governance had offered (Clogg 1976: Chapter 2). The importance of a masonic movement called the Filiki Eteria (Friendly Society)<sup>46</sup> developing from within the diaspora merchant community based on the Russian Black Sea shores for the formulation and emanation of nationalist thought in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century is indeed difficult to deny. However, as will be shown, their efforts were relatively isolated from the 'mainland' Greek elites and where they did apply themselves directly, in the Principalities of Walachia (today's Romania and Bulgaria), the revolt was unsuccessful. However, once the revolt was set in motion on the Peloponnese, a commonality of interest was discovered given an already present maturing social conflict between the vested interests of conservative Greek Orthodox families with the accelerated modernizing efforts by the Porte. In this context, critical Greek historians argue that there is a need "to dispel an erroneous idea, often held by nationalist writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: Ottoman occupation. A presence which lasted for five centuries and which imposed a new political, administrative and social order cannot be reduced to a temporary military situation of different peoples in conflict with each other" (Castellan 1992: 209).<sup>47</sup> Building on these findings, this

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<sup>46</sup> The spelling varies within the English language literature: Philiki Ektairia, Filiki Etaria or Philiki Hektaria to name but a few.

<sup>47</sup> For other critical approaches see Gourgouris (1996), Kitiromilides (1993, 1994b; Kitiromilides 1989), Kostis (2005), Koundoura (2007); Misha Glenny's comprehensive study on the whole of the Balkans and Caroline Finkel's recent re-interpretation of Ottoman history include similarly critical arguments (Glenny 2000; Finkel 2005). Maria Todorova's critical perspective covers the



chapter will argue that even though there *was* a discernible penetration of Western European nationalist ideology through the Diaspora merchant class organized within the Filiki Eteria, the deeper cause of the Greek secession lies within the social struggles between the centre and the periphery. Including this dimension into the analysis is important, for, while it removed the Muslim population, landlords and peasants alike, the secession left the established Christian local social hierarchy largely intact.<sup>48</sup> This is not to say, however, that social struggles beyond the inter-elite conflict played no role. The military class constituted by landless peasants is of particular relevance in this context. However, their actions were not inspired by a liberal ‘intellectual’ or ‘bourgeois’ call for revolution, but resembled much more a peasant uprising. These so-called brigands’ intentions mainly originated from the increasing efforts of pooling social power both by local primates on the one hand and the Ottoman central state on the other. Having grown within the mountainous prebendal economy of the pre-capitalist Ottoman agricultural society, the penetration of their traditionally conflicting sources of revenue – policing and banditry – by a competing modernizing central state produced a growing number of unemployed and discontented arms bearing men for whom revolt, even though not necessarily a nationalist one, appeared as an appealing opportunity for improving their social situation. Finally, these conclusions will be related back to the overall question of national secessions and revolutions within International Relations. This chapter will close by emphasizing the social, geographical and cultural specificity and complexity of these transformations which serve as an illustration for the limitations and sometimes even dangers of both nationalist and teleological narratives and substantiate the need to extract ontologies like ‘social’ and ‘the international’ carefully from historically specific contexts.

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whole of the Balkan Peninsula (Todorova 2005; Todorova 1994; Todorova 1997). While her postmodernist critique is useful in breaking up the mainstream nationalist discourse, she does not offer a meaningful explanation for events of her own; for a critical comparative Turkish/Greek history of nationalism in the region see Özkirimli and Sofos (2008)

<sup>48</sup> Vassilis Filias for example argues that whilst the outbreak of revolt was owed to the success of a bourgeois movement, the Orthodox old regime held considerably more social power and was therefore able to swiftly appropriate the revolt and direct it in favour of its own purposes (Filias 1972).

## 4.2 Markets and Merchants: The Enlightenment Story of Greek ‘Liberation’

### 4.2.1 The Hellenic Lineage

In many ways it is evident how the above understanding came to dominate the historiography of the Greek Independence struggle. I call this narrative here the ‘Hellenic liberation paradigm’. This paradigm not only, controversially, assumes “the historical continuity of Hellenism from classical times through to the formation of the modern Greek state,” (Kitroeff 1989: 269) but also understands the Ottoman presence as an exploitative and unjust form of rule, which was finally ended as part of a teleological notion of development thriving to ‘liberate’ a historically coherent society in the years from 1821 to 1832. This nationalist historiography of Hellenic lineage and ‘Greek awakening’ continues to dominate the discourse due to its state founding and supporting purpose. The less influential debates about the social construction of Greek nationality, however, developed long before the already discussed nationalism debates in the 1980s emerged. For good reason, they developed in conjunction with the very emergence of the Greek Question in the 1820s. Central to this initial debate was the challenge to the Hellenic linearity argument by the Tyrolean Jakob Phillip Fallmerayer. Having witnessed the popular currents of Philhellenism in Bavaria<sup>49</sup>, he set out to investigate the history of the ‘Hellenes’ in his *‘Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters’* (The history of the Morea peninsula during the Middle Ages) (Fallmerayer 1830: vii ) starting from an impartial, if not outright pro-Greek position. His conclusions, however, were far from unclear or uncontroversial:

“The race of the Hellenes has been wiped out in Europe. Physical beauty, intellectual brilliance, innate harmony and simplicity, art, competition, city, village, the splendour of column and temple — indeed, even the name has disappeared from the surface of the Greek continent.... Not the slightest drop of undiluted Hellenic blood flows in the veins of the Christian population of present-day Greece” (Fallmerayer 1830: 55).

Even though his motivation remains speculative and he might have had a slavophobic background, Fallmerayer, in principle, made an important point about the impossibility of the transhistorical preservation of the Greek ‘nation’ from Classical Greece into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. He contended that the Hellenes had left the Morea in the Middle Ages which was then later inhabited by Slavic (and ultimately Turkish) tribes with no Hellenic heritage. What seems to be forgotten easily by advocates of

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<sup>49</sup> Bavaria was by no means the only country within which Philhellenism was popular. Most notably France and, naturally, Russia were the other centres of Philhellenic movements.

the historical continuity argument is that the first Hellenic constitutional monarchy, headed by a European dynast born in 1830, not only defied its oligarchic Athenian heritage institutionally, but also that a unified Greek state was, on the condition the Byzantine Empire is considered more of Roman than of Greek origin (which it usually is by Greek nationalists), without historical precedence altogether.

Fallmerayer, an eminent historian at the time, teaching at intuitions in Augsburg and Landshut triggered uproar by Bavarian and other Philhellenes, but his assumptions about the essentially Slavic origin of what became known as the ‘Greek’ population could be instrumentalized as a powerful argument in favour of an anti-Russian and pro-Ottoman foreign policy, endorsed first and foremost by Britain.<sup>50</sup> This earned Fallmerayer the reputation of being one of the first advocates of *Realpolitik* in relation to the Eastern Question (Veloudis 1982: 39-42). Yet, what was at stake with Philhellenism – most famously reflected in the Greek travel literature of Lord Byron<sup>51</sup> – were not only questions about Greek historiography, but also questions about Europe. Much of the European Enlightenment understood Greece to constitute “the missing link for the rejuvenation of European civilization” (Kasaba 2003: 11). Naturally, within the Greek “War of Liberation” fought against an ‘Oriental’ regime, an Asiatic Despot provided a real-life geopolitical manifestation for projecting Europe’s progress onto the ‘Turkish’ mirror image (Yapp 1992). As is explained elsewhere, this European identity formation on the bandwagon of the Greek Revolt was soon to clash with the illiberal realities on the ground.<sup>52</sup>

#### **4.2.2 The Neohellenic Enlightenment**

Despite the fact that arguments insisting on a historical continuity from Classical Greece to the 19<sup>th</sup> century remain, at best, doubtful, there was doubtlessly a sui generis intellectual movement that can justly be labelled the ‘Greek Enlightenment’. However, the protagonists of the Greek Enlightenment had their social origins in an exile Greek community, the so-called heterochthons, who had gained their ‘Enlightened’ views mainly through French education. In the liberation paradigm it is

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<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, this policy was also supported by Karl Marx in a 1854 Article (Marx 1854)

<sup>51</sup> Official British policy initially opposed Greek Independence for geostrategic reasons, but there existed noticeable support for the Greek struggle within the educated elites, most crucially within the City’s circles of high finance; see Finlay (1877); see also chapter 5

<sup>52</sup> See chapter 6

this proto-bourgeois class which had “acted as the catalyst which started the whole revolutionary process and gave it direction” (Mouzelis 1978: 12-13).

This potentially revolutionary bourgeoisie in the form of a Greek diaspora was spread across Europe, but from 1774 large communities developed around the Black Sea shores. According to most mainstream historiography, the importance of this Christian Orthodox merchant community grew simultaneously with Ottoman decline (Stoianovich 1960). On the one hand, Catherine the Great enticed a variety of minority groups, amongst them Christian subjects from the Ottoman Empire, to settle in what was labelled the ‘New Russia’ after the Russian conquest of the territories around the Black Sea from the Ottomans in 1774.<sup>53</sup> According to Catherine’s rationale, these new Russian possessions required economic and demographic revitalization in order to generate fiscal revenue from these largely unpopulated regions. There was also a defense rationale to this project, however, as populating the empty steppe was thought to deter a potential Ottoman territorial reappraisal (Kardasēs 2001: 11). In the pursuit of this scheme the proverbial ‘Potemkin Villages’ have their origin, as Catherine’s minister Grigori Alexandrovich Potyomkin ordered the erection of fake settlements in order to please Catherine when she inspected the progress of settlement activity in the Crimea in 1787. This is not to say, though, that this policy was unsuccessful altogether. While the settlement of Germans and Slavs was aimed at providing a productive force to cultivate the empty land, the Jewish and Armenian settlers were supposed to grow trade networks capable of realizing profits from the new produce, with the most noteworthy communities being established in Odessa and Sevastopol. This was necessary in the light of the remarkable absence of a native merchant class. “...The aim was to grant privileges to engage in trading activities to settlers with a strong tradition in business enterprise” (Kardasēs 2001: 13). Indeed, the Christian Orthodox community who lived in the European parts of the Ottoman Empire appeared to fit this bill just fine and followed the Russian invitation. However, this project faced significant geopolitical impediments given the topography of the region leading to the maritime isolation of the Black Sea trading routes. Consequently, Catherine’s plans were commercially less successful than originally envisaged, leading to a surplus merchant population who were often unemployed and discontent.

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<sup>53</sup> See chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of how the Küçük Kaynarca treaty establishing the Russian dominance in the Black Sea.

At the same time, Ottoman modernization had brought with it a diplomatic revolution at the Porte. While the Sultan previously shunned foreign dignitaries in much the same way as the Chinese Emperor, the closure of borders had initiated an increased international role of the Ottoman Empire, which simultaneously augmented the importance of Phanariot 'Greeks'<sup>54</sup> who remained in the Ottoman Empire as Dragomans (or translators) of the Porte. According to Jonathan Irvine Israel, this new class of translators started to satisfy the need for trans-national Christian intermediaries who had been unnecessary during the time of continued Ottoman expansion and purely hostile relations (Israel 2006: 318-19). Once territorial stagnation commenced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, external relations went from a state of continuous competition and violence to a state of consolidation, which, as was shown, initiated a process of strengthening the Ottoman administration's competence in foreign relations, led by Christian Orthodox subjects of the Sultan. Thus, while the pre-1821 'Greek' merchants in Russia experienced challenging times, the 'Greek' bureaucrats of Istanbul prospered.

It was at this historical juncture that the Greek Enlightenment emerged as an intellectual movement, which is not to be confused with an identifiable potential for local social change. Consequently, at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the central figures of the Greek Enlightenment were still part of the Sultan's administration. Alexander Mavrocordatos (1636 – 1709) could be called the first eminent figure of the Greek Enlightenment. He was the first Dragoman of the Porte and passed this office on to his son, Nikolas (1670 -1730). As Nikolas went on to be appointed to the office of hospodar of Wallachia and Moldavia, the two Principalities under Ottoman suzerainty which would later become the cause of much contention between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, he in fact founded what could be called the Mavrocordatos dynasty in today's Romania and Bulgaria. The eventually more influential part of this movement was in the service of the Tsar, however. Rigas Velestinlis (1757–1798) and Adamantios Koraes (1748–1833)<sup>55</sup> could be identified as the central figures of this intellectual movement. Interestingly, Velestinli's 'Republic of Virtue' did not advocate a separate national state, but foresaw a multi ethnic, multicultural state with a 'Hellenic' Republican constitution. This state is, thus, premised on the insight of the

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<sup>54</sup> Phanariots were Greek noble officials named after the Phanar district of Istanbul. They had been entrusted with large parts of the Ottoman administration, namely all foreign relations, translations and the administration of the Principalities of Walachia and Moldavia as so-called *hospodar* Princes

<sup>55</sup> Rigas Velestinlis is also known as Rigas Feraios. For a collection of pamphlets and essays by Velestinlis and Korais, see Clogg (1976); for a discussion of Korais see Chaconas (1942).

supposed archaic nature of Ottoman rule, but as opposed to popular wisdom, does not draw from this the necessity of national dismemberment, but merely a replacement of the 'Oriental' central authority with a 'Hellenized', libertarian version of it. Due to the ambiguity of Rigas's thought, expressed in his emphasis on 'Greek' rule by which he meant a cosmopolitan democracy in the Ottoman Empire more than ethnically exclusive territorial rule, he is considered to represent the already discussed problematic "transition from Enlightenment cosmopolitanism, of which his ideas constitute a distinct expression, to the age of nationalism in the Balkans" (Kitromilides 2003: 437). As opposed to territorially and ethnically exclusive nationalism, the 'Republic of Virtue' constituted a truly revolutionary manifest which did not understand secession as an integral part of social change. Instead, Rigas proposed to transform all Ottoman subjects into modern citizens, creating a multicultural civil society under a 'Hellenic' constitution that was to replace the Sultan's rule. Rigas, thus, refused to see the ethnic and linguistic diversity so frequently cited as the essential reason behind Ottoman weakness and decline as a problem or even guide for further development, not least "since neither Montesquieu nor Rousseau excluded the possibility of an extensive republic" (Kitromilides 2003: 470). The appropriation of Rigas as an advocate of cultural nationalism by the 'liberation paradigm', in the sense of a philosophy of ethnically exclusive territoriality, is therefore difficult to reconcile with his proposed 'Republican Hellenism' (Kitromilides 2003: 474). Rigas's understanding of 'Hellenic' was in purely normative terms, explicitly denying any ethnic implications. The Greek nationalist reading of his thinking as a theory of ethnic exclusion and, later, with the Megali Idea of territorial expansionism, can only be seen as a remarkable, if not outright dangerous misrepresentation. While this was already problematic and inflammatory, it set in motion a process at the end of which "the European territory of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire became a field of bloody jostling between militaristic states that excluded each other – while they all oppressed national minorities – with the bisectional mediation of European imperialisms" (Koutalis 2003). Interestingly the first modernist political thinkers within the Ottoman administration itself, who were of similar social origin as the representatives of the Greek Enlightenment, faced a similar fate when the Young Turk movement in its final pre-Republican stage, ethnically constrained the much more inclusive and cosmopolitan political project of Young Ottomanism. It is worth mentioning at this point, however, that the policy of 'Turkification' developed not least in opposition to

this emerging ethnically exclusive Greek irredentism (cf. Özkirimli and Sofos 2008). These mutually exclusive as well as constitutive forms of territorial sovereignty can be seen as the long-term result of the emergence of Greek cultural nationalism. In this they stood in opposition to the original vision of the Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment they were supposedly derived from. In other words, Rigas's original conception of Hellenization explicitly denied the understanding of Greece as the "distinct geographical, political and cultural space" (Peckham 2001: 21) it was to become soon after.

Koraes, on the other hand, was not of a similar intellectual calibre. He epitomized, as Dean Kostantaras put it, the "diaspora awakener" (Kostantaras 2008: 702). Having studied in Paris and Montpellier and being deeply influenced by the French Revolution and the American Independence struggle, these figures were, according to Kostantaras, not only passive consumers of nationalist thought, but active participants in the wider intellectual transformation going on in Europe at the time. This is why also Anthony Smith sees Koraes's contribution to nationalist thought as on a par with Rousseau, Fichte, Herder and Mazzini (Hutchinson and Smith 1994: 4). However, it is important to note that the literature produced by these pioneers of Greek nationalism had little impact on the Ottoman lands that were to become Greece. On the other hand, they were warmly received by other self-declared 'Greeks' in Russian service, most importantly the Russian foreign minister and later first President of Greece, Count Ionnais Capodistrias (1776–1831), and the leader of the uprising in the Principalities, Alexander Ypsilantis (1792–1828). These two personalities from within the Tsarist administration were to establish the organizational and military core of the uprising respectively.

In sum, this vision of a 'Neohellenic Enlightenment' had "linked the task of recovering Hellenic antiquity with the dissemination of European intellectual, scientific and technological developments, ideals and values" (Özkirimli and Sofos 2008: 23). It is noteworthy that the ideological motivation was mainly held on the part of the Greek diaspora nobility and echoed in some of the Enlightened Absolutist European dynasties, who supported the Greek cause in straight contradiction to their commitments to the conservative values of the Vienna international order. However, as the eventual nature of the Greek state up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century illustrates, this vision was not shared by any indigenous elements within the territories known to have been part of Ancient Greece. As many local nobles (so-called primates) as well as the Orthodox clergy held rather advantageous social positions and were unwilling

to relinquish these, the chances of success for this ‘revolution from outside’ appeared to be meagre.

Maria Koundoura describes the origins of these romanticised ideas about Greek independence in Russian exile as a somewhat irrational and “nostalgic desire for a home one knows one cannot have but still longs for”. According to her reading, this is “not part of an existential search for locatedness but the product of a necessary dislocation, usually economic or political” (Koundoura 2007: 46). This indeed appeared to be the psychological state of the ‘Greco’-Russian elites in question, even though it has to be mentioned that their dislocation was the somewhat natural state of most individuals associated with ‘Greekness’ – either of noble or mercantile – ‘transnational’ – origin. It is important to note that this ‘quest’ for a homeland or ‘real’ Greece, as Koundoura calls it, did not arise out of an economic, political or any other form of grievance the Ottoman regime was culpable of, since it was completely removed from the Black Sea at that point. This means that any form of discontent must have been generated within the context of the Russian ‘exile’.

It is, therefore, not very likely that the source of the exiles’, or as they are known in Greek historiography, ‘heterochthon’s dissatisfaction would have been shared in the Morea or, in fact, any other part of what we know as Greece today. Nevertheless, the liberation paradigm rests upon the assumption of the generally collective and grassroots nature of the struggle. In other words, Greek nationalism is not just understood as what it was, i.e. an abstract elitist concept residing mainly within the heterochthon Grecophone nobility, but is synthetically translated into a large-scale popular penetration of European Enlightenment thought. These ideas then were supposed to have awoken an intrinsic long held popular desire for ‘liberation’ from an exploitative Ottoman ‘yoke’. This is why French liberal political ideology was thought to naturally combine with the discontent of the illiterate peasant masses into the powerful social mechanism of revolution, liberation and secession.

#### **4.2.3 The Filike Eteria**

With the conceptual framework as well as the social fuel readily available and naturally converging, the success of the uprising was thought to simply rest on the central organization and careful planning by a secret nationalistic society called the Filiki Eteria (Friendly Society). This quasi-masonic lodge was set up by three unsuccessful members of the mercantile Greek diaspora at the then Russian Black Sea port of Odessa in September 1815. At its inception the society was comprised of



Athanasios Tsakalov, from Moscow, Nikolaos Skoufas, from Odessa and Emmanuil Xanthos, from Xenos - all of whom had, at least in theory, a significant interest in the stability of the region as their entrepreneurial interests had been hurt by the continuing Ottoman-Russian conflicts. War and upheaval was to threaten the already slack trading activities and revenues. It was, nevertheless, mainly from within this society that the idea of an independent Greek state and an anti-Ottoman struggle was propagated, rather than from the representatives of the Greek Enlightenment. This socio-intellectual origin of the Greek 'awakening' could, thus, lend credit to the World Systems argument about an increase in mercantile activity and, by extension, political ambition, due to the expansion of the 'world economy'.

Despite this seemingly unambiguous empirical evidence, there remain, however, various theoretical problems with the unquestioning identification of this bourgeois mercantile class with nationalism. Firstly, their primary source of social identity was Orthodox or Muslim religion, rather than any form of modern ethnicity. To be precise, the Orthodox community was just as diverse as the rest of the Ottoman population, with its members only being identified as Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians and Macedonians as a result of various state-formations.<sup>56</sup> Secondly, even though many of these Orthodox subjects had constituted the trans-national mercantile class of the Ottoman Empire, many others remained direct producers, who were, as a rule, uneducated and illiterate. As Reşat Kasaba elaborates, the argument about a native Greek Enlightenment was mostly a reflection of European Philhellenic wishful thinking, rather than being based on any real existing social movements at least as far as the Peloponnesus was concerned (Kasaba 2003). Thirdly, it appears not unproblematic to link the expansion of trade with the emergence of nationalism. The vast majority of 'Greek' merchants having settled in Odessa and elsewhere in southern Russian were not inclined to migrate into 'their' homeland after independence since they had "entered the dominant social strata of their places of domicile" (Kardasēs 2001: 14f). On the contrary, the welcoming conditions in Russia, with a large degree of local autonomy granted, attracted migration from the

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<sup>56</sup> Both Armenian and Jewish mercantile classes were treated separately. While the Armenian community was significant, the Jewish population was smaller in comparison and had no connection to a nationalist uprising prior to Zionism. There was no power contestation with the Ottoman regime or the Young Turks. As a matter of fact, the latter's attitude towards the Zionist movement unfolding in Palestine is subject to much historiographic contestation. Many Arab suspicions about the Young Turk movement supporting Zionism helped shaping anti-Ottoman Arab Nationalism, see Dawn (1993: 17-18). Some British sources, on the other hand, thought to have identified a "Judeo-Masonic-Zionist-conspiracy" behind the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, whilst, finally Israeli historiography tends to emphasize the Ottoman restrictions on Jewish settlement activities, see Öke (1986: 216); for an overview see Olson (1986)

Peloponnesus towards the Black Sea shores even after independence. Equally telling is the fact that the same is true about the 'Greeks' living in Anatolia and other parts of the remaining Ottoman Empire, including those in the service of the Sultan's bureaucracy, who showed no inclination to move to their supposed new 'homeland' until forced to do so as part of the post-war mandatory population exchange of 1923.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, from a theoretical point of view, it seems generally problematic to *a priori* equate the mere presence of merchants with a self-conscious and politically ambitious social collective.

In the Greek case, this class, precisely because its fortunes were derived from costly ship building activities, was actually not entirely distinct and abstract from the landed aristocracy. In particular, some of the Aegean Islands owned renowned shipbuilding enterprises, making the Ottoman-Greek mercantile fleet one of the biggest in the Mediterranean. However, as capital markets were not developed or inaccessible to the region, merchants were dependent on agricultural revenues extracted from large landed possessions to finance ship building. Access to agricultural produce as initial trading goods for overseas trade was equally of importance. Thus, even though influential Greek ship owning families with their prominent presence in the City of London remain famous to this day, this mercantile class, whilst growing into an emerging world economy, was not necessarily of an urban, bourgeois origin and was in many cases either identical or at least still linked through kinship and clientelism to the Greek landed nobility, the so-called primates.

In sum, the motivation of the initial three individuals making up the Filike Eteria without doubt remains obscure (Frangos 1973). Unless we take Greek independence to represent the design for a wider Balkan uprising as envisaged by the early revolutionaries, aiming at replacing the Ottoman 'multinational' Empire by an equally cosmopolitan Byzantine resurrection, it remains unclear how a further particularization of rule, rather than the unification of markets (like in the more intelligible Italian and German cases) could have benefited a merchant's trading interest or be conducive to creating a liberal Enlightened polity. Even though the Filiki Eteria seems to confirm an argument about a Greek bourgeois revolution, even conservative historians like Richard Clogg concede that it is often overlooked that "very few of the established and wealthy merchants either within or without the

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<sup>57</sup> On an unrelated note, it is interesting to observe that a significant number of Christian peasants migrated in the opposite direction.

Empire (...) were prepared to have anything to do with the seemingly madcap conspiratorial schemes of the Eteria. The bulk of the ‘merchants’ who did enrol were merchants’ clerks or little more than pedlars, men on the margin of society, who had failed to adapt to xeniteia, or exile from their own traditional societies” (Clogg 1979: 49). Hence, there are various problems with overstating the influence of the Eterists, not least since they were not representing a socially discontent mass movement. Yet, even if a purely intellectual appeal of an elite driven Enlightenment ideology is taken to be the *causa causans* of the Greek secession, this does not necessarily clarify which exact normative prescriptions would be derived from the intellectual permeation facilitated by the Eterists. Fred Halliday, for example, enumerates a proliferation of possible effects of the Enlightenment on the International, which are by no means limited to national secession outright (Halliday 1999a). Even if there *were* a hazy impact of the Enlightenment, this did not straightforwardly lead into a large-scale popular support for a national cause, as the lack of success of the revolt in the Principalities illustrates. In other words, a mere intellectual appeal of Enlightenment thought to small parts of the heterochthon (exile) Greek community cannot convincingly explain a historical event of the magnitude of the Greek secession. Any critical mass with the potential for such a large transformation, to the extent that it did exist, must have been unconscious of Western European political thought at the time, seeing as access to this discourse was limited to the elites. Thus, it is not so much that the local Greek Revolt drew “intense support from those dwelling outside the nation” (Kostantaras 2008), but, if anything the other way round, i.e. that the Greek national project was conceived of and pursued first and foremost in a geographically distant area, by distant people, with no obvious direct connection to any local revolutionary potential.

### **4.3 Orthodoxy and the Rum Millet**

In the following section this claim about the remarked absence of a revolutionary class within Greece proper will be substantiated further by a more detailed look at the local social structures. As we have seen, the appeal of Enlightenment thinking and the mercantile/bourgeois political potential leaves much to be desired by way of a powerful explanation for the Greek secession. As we have further elaborated, the argument about a Hellenic lineage is equally difficult to sustain. The Byzantine lineage, on the other hand, was historically closer. In fact it was this Eastern Roman,

rather than Hellenic identity, which was preserved under Ottoman rule as a centralized ecclesiastic community in the form of the Millet System. This so-called Rum Millet<sup>58</sup> included all Orthodox Christian subjects of the Porte and provided, apart from the spiritual authority, a form of cultural semi-autonomy including social and family legislation (Davison 1982; Karpas 1982; Stamatopoulos 2006). The Rum Millet was constituted mainly by the Orthodox clergy and a Christian landowning regime, the primates. This so-called Greek nobility could win a lot from Greek independence, yet it also stood to lose out once the movement would exceed a mere secession aimed at disposing of Ottoman fiscal rule and take on the character of a wider social upheaval with the potential of significantly altering the relations of social power and property ownership. For the Rum Millet elites, social change was a threat whether it was conceived of in Odessa, Istanbul or elsewhere, while, on the other hand, severing ties with the Ottoman treasury nevertheless appeared to be a very attractive prospect. They needed to ensure (and eventually did) that the ongoing transformations never exceeded the ousting of an increasingly demanding overlord in the form of the Sultan.

Even though the Rum Millet was in effect part of the Ottoman ruling regime, it could still serve as a perennial dividing line between two mutually ‘foreign’ Christian and Muslim communities which then received territorial identities in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Ottoman social structures institutionalized religious difference as well as formalizing inequality before the law according to the three Abrahamic religions (Braude and Lewis 1980).<sup>59</sup> This could have been said to provide “a primordial line of demarcation” (Mavrogordatos 2003: 117). As this Christian/Roman community had been institutionally preserved ever since the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Orthodoxy could be used as a prime social marker, not least since it implied legal inequality in terms of the Ottoman Islamic laws of which 19<sup>th</sup> century national movements could build upon.<sup>60</sup> The trading and cultural links to Europe institutionalized through the Rum Millet could equally serve as a channel for the presumed intellectual penetration of European libertarian thinking. This means that from the outset, as Richard Davison put it, “the hypothesis that the *Millets* would

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<sup>58</sup> ‘Rum’ is derived from (Eastern) Roman nation, see: Roudemetof (1998) For a historiographic discussion of the term Millet see Braude (1984)

<sup>59</sup> A separate Armenian legal community (*Islahat Fermani*) was formed as part of the Tanzimat in 1856

<sup>60</sup> This argument was, amongst others, advanced by the eminent Turkish historian (1982).

serve as agents or channels of Westernization in the Ottoman Empire appears, then, to have some basis” (Davison 1982: 319).

Even though the modern Turkish word ‘Millet’ in fact does translate into English as ‘nation’, Davison’s own test of this hypothesis leads him to the assumption that “the millets were also conservative, probably much more so than they were agents of change” (Davison 1982: 332). Rather than Christians constituting a homogenous class of direct producers and Muslims making up an ethnically homogenous class of landowners, class and social divisions were not identical with religious and what came to be ethnic divides. Apart from many Greeks occupying high ranking positions within the administration, “in fact, the [Orthodox] Patriarch was a recognized Ottoman official, holding the rank of vizier and serving as intermediary between the Orthodox Christians and the imperial government” (Stavrianos 1957: 336). Renk Özdemir just recently pointed out that not only had “both Muslim and non-Muslim Ottomans (...) intersecting definitions of ‘belonging’” but also that within the context of the Orthodox Millet, “neither the state apparatus nor the religious institutions within its realms ascribed ethnicity, let alone race, to their religiously defined communities until nationalisms began to rise ” (Özdemir 2008: 21-22). These pre-existing social differentiations, consisting mostly in religious and to a lesser degree linguistic communities, thus, far from constituting the underlying cause of the conflict, if anything, may have been exploited in a process that has its origins elsewhere. As paradoxical as this may sound for a state that also embodied the Islamic Caliphate, but Christian Orthodoxy served almost as much as a foundational state ideology for Ottoman rule as Islam did. The Ottoman state remained true to its Byzantine heritage throughout its final struggle in 1922/23. Evoking religiosity as the main social ‘divider’, therefore, is not conducive to identifying the dynamics underlying the Greek struggle, even though doing so has been a common and central part of the liberation paradigm.

Rather than simply being identical with Orthodox Christianity, the modern concept of ‘Greekness’ as a collective identity was fed from two sources. On the one hand, it had indeed a traditional religious origin embodied in the Christian Ancient Regime of the Rum Millet. In contradiction to this traditionalist origin, it was fuelled by the liberal ‘Greek Enlightenment’, mostly generated in exile, but maintaining a generally progressive outlook. In other words, the agents of social stasis and change

were paradoxically supposed to pursue the same political agenda – Greek nationalism. Given the social position of the Rum Millet, some doubts can be raised as to whether Greek independence really does stand in an ‘Enlightened’ liberal tradition. Furthermore, the Orthodox community was headed by a clergy that was deeply entwined with the centre of Ottoman power, i.e. the supposed ‘oppressor’ through the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. In consequence, the question as to where exactly the ‘Greek Enlightenment’ had its social base remains wide open. This, finally, leads to the assumption that the purely *religious* community of the Rum Millet cannot be equated with what was to become the modern *ethnic* Greek nation. It is hard to see how social change would be generated from within the Ottoman Rum Millet, as the independence struggle was threatening to break up its cosmopolitan scope, as well as menacing the social position of its Orthodox leaders. In sum, it remains doubtful whether the intellectual impulse of the Enlightenment or the pre-existing social differentiation in the form of the Rum Millet can be considered a motivating force for the 19<sup>th</sup> century opposition to the Ottoman center.

#### **4.4 The Muslim Bonaparte**

It is argued here that it was the Sultans Selim III (1789-1807) and Mahmud II (1808-1839) that generated this opposition. Given the diversity and high degree of autonomy of the various parts of the Ottoman Empire, to many, their attempts to territorially consolidate and centralize their domain necessarily implied a degree of over ambition, if not delusion. Selim lost his life to a palace conspiracy as a result of his challenge to various vested interests. His premature death might be less surprising when looking at the list of groups and individuals profiting from the ineffectiveness of the Ottoman state. Namely, this included the âyân nobles, derebey local administrators and the notorious Janissary slave soldiers whose reign of terror in Serbia had led to the first of the Balkan uprisings in 1804. As we have seen, many of these were semi-independent autonomous centres of power within the Ottoman state structures which had succeeded in bypassing the Porte’s formerly effectual capacity of central control and taxation. This, naturally, led to an “intense conflict between modernizing efforts and local conservatism” (Roudemotof 2001: 101).

Yet, the decisive challenge in the ‘Greek’ context was, paradoxically, not posed by any elements from within the Rum Millet or the Etarists, but by a Muslim

Albanian who had no obvious connection to, or interest in, the Greek project. Being one of the most powerful amongst the local notables, if not *the* most powerful, save Muhammad Ali, Ali Pasha of Janina, or Ibrahim Pasha (1741–1822)<sup>61</sup>, as he was also known, was initially not related to Greek nationalism. His scheme was from the outset to diminish and, if necessary for the maintenance of his autonomy, to dispose of Ottoman rule wherever he could. In pursuit of this agenda, Ali Pasha created a semi-Empire of his own around the district of Janina (today's Albania and northwestern Greece, also known as Epirus and Thessaly) where he had originally been appointed as the *de jure* governor by the Sultan himself. However, Mahmud II reversed his predecessor's policy of appeasing the powerful 'Lion of Janina', and started to directly and militarily challenge what had become a formidable obstacle to Ottoman state-building in the region. This provided Ali with incentives not only to befriend, but also to actively support the Etarist's agenda. Dennis Skiotis claims that the general revolt of the Greeks in the spring of 1821 was intimately tied to Ali Pasha's revolt, even if they had entirely distinct social origins and political purposes. Even if we were to assume that Ali Pasha was generally indifferent towards the 'Greek' cause, he decided to exploit their discontent to his own ends, once he "realized that in late 1819 and early 1820 (...), it was Ottoman policy to reduce him at all costs" (Skiotis 1976: 99). In the pursuit of this aim, Ali Pasha even went so far as to convert from Islam to Orthodox Christianity so as to appeal to his newly found 'Orthodox brothers' to help him support his cause for 'liberation'. Arguably, playing the Greek and the implied Russian card was Ali's last resort. In Skiotis's words "had the Ottomans purposely set out to raise allies for Ali, they could scarcely have acted as efficaciously" (Skiotis 1976: 105). Thus, Mahmud II's attempt to challenge Ali Pasha's non-nationalistic, paternalistic Greco-Albanian<sup>62</sup> quasi-state at the same time as the emerging Greek Nationalist elements, unintentionally forged these otherwise rather disparate interests into an alliance of convenience and inadvertently created a powerful enemy, the combined fighting power of which seriously undermined the little faith that was left in Ottoman military prowess. It was this decision by Sultan Mahmud to try and subdue Ali Pasha by force that, according to Skiotis, ensured the success of the Greek revolt:

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<sup>61</sup> For a detailed biographical account see Fleming (1999)

<sup>62</sup> Debates persist to this date as to whether 'Albania' ethnically belongs to Greece. Notably, however, Greece abstained from supporting the Kosovan liberation movement and was the only NATO member not to take part in the 1999 intervention in Serbia in a bid for regional stability and/or pan-Orthodox solidarity.

“...Sultan Mahmud II, an arrogant and stubborn ruler whose consuming ambition was to reassert the absolute power of the sultanate, saw fit to challenge the redoubtable Albanian vizier. His decision was to have catastrophic consequences for the empires. It led ultimately to a disastrous foreign war, during which the sound of Russian cannon was to reverberate in Constantinople itself, and it saw a subject people gain full independence, an example for other to try and emulate” (Skiotis 1976: 98).

#### **4.5 The Conservative Turn**

The relative strength of the local conservative forces initially appeared to be feeding into the overall effort to overthrow Ottoman rule, albeit for vastly different reasons. However, given the Christian Orthodox and traditionalist character not only of the primates, but of the vast majority of the population, this poses the immediate question of how to bring about an actual Revolution whilst exploiting the social power of what could be called an ancient regime? Therefore, conservative Greek historiography needs “...to bridge the gap between the conspiracy that existed for the most part on paper and the full mobilization of resources once the day of reckoning came. Hence it is not surprising that some have questioned the importance of the Eteria particularly since, once the revolution had begun, it seems to have exercised little or no influence on events” (Dakin 1973: 46). The following section problematizes this relationship between the ‘modern’ nationalist forces emanating from the Greek diaspora and local social forces involved in the physical struggle with the Sultan’s armies.

This is of great importance, for the liberation paradigm has frequently blamed the ‘hostile take-over’ of the new state by conservative forces after a successful bourgeois/national revolution for all problems associated with the development of post-revolutionary Greece. In principle, however, those conservative forces were also required by the liberal project since various imperatives existed to present the revolt as an Orthodox and anti-Islamic Christian liberation struggle. On the one hand, this was necessary in order to gather the support of the conservative nobles as well as the generally deeply religious mass of the population, but also internationally since the Greek insurgency had to signal to the reactionary European Concert (and especially its most ardent supporter the Tsar) that their revolt was not “inspired by demagoguery or Jacobinism. It was rather a crusade of Christians against Muslims, the attempt of a Greek nation to remove the barbaric Turkish yoke and revive the culture of its famed ancestors” (Petropoulos 1968: 43). However, this would be a circle difficult to square, as a focus on the Orthodox religiosity of a movement that had, supposedly, its roots in



the same Enlightenment and revolutionary tradition that had brought chaos to Europe, created a dilemma. The revolutionary leaders could not claim to be guided by both fundamentally opposing influences, i.e. a deeply conservative Orthodox influence which was in fact associated with Ottoman power and a liberal revolutionary and above all secular Enlightenment ideology, promising social change, individualism and secularism.

Thus, unsurprisingly, “as it did elsewhere, the French Revolution caused a serious rift in Greek society. Following the lead of Russia’s Catherine II, the Patriarchate of Constantinople [rather than the Ottoman administration itself] now became the centre of reaction. The conservative clerics gained the upper hand, and often those who had started out as liberals turned conservative” (Petropulos 1968: 39). This created complex and contradictory social positions for many conservative Greek elites of the Ottoman Empire. In particular, however, the Orthodox clergy faced a paradoxical situation as it could interpret conservatism in either a Byzantine/Ottoman manner and uphold its allegiance to the Sultan or in a Greek territorial way and support the independence movement. For some who had always been part of the Ottoman ruling elites, like the primates (Christian landowners) or the Phanariots, the choice was fundamentally between maintaining their established social positions and taking a conservative view in line with the essentially Ottoman Patriarchate as well as the European inter-state system or to put themselves at the spearhead of the Nationalist revolt in the hope of further improving their positions obliterating the Ottoman tax collector. Once the revolt was in full swing, however, the primates, “who stood to lose so much in case the rising should prove abortive, had necessarily to join in, for fear that if they remained aloof they would be confounded with the tyrant” (Petropulos 1968: 60). The clergy, on the other hand, who had initially defended the Sultanic polity as the guardian of the divine Orthodox order, was relieved of their dilemma by the assassination of the Patriarch and his clergymen in Constantinople by a mob on Easter Monday 1821 as a reprisal for the outbreak of the revolt.

#### 4.6 Brigands without a Cause<sup>63</sup>

Thus far, only the social location(s) of various ruling classes and their respective roles in the struggle with the Ottoman centre have been discussed. While this is important, an eminent need persists to clarify the position of the majority of the population, the direct producers. Their role could easily be relegated to mere passivity, not least since they continued to disappoint Philhellenic European contemporaries, who found them to be, as Lady Montagu observed, "...ignorant peasants who do not know what butter is, nor what their antiquity represents" (Koundoura 2007: 45). Establishing a lack of peasant agency would leave another question unanswered, namely about the social origin and driving force of the fighting men. Indeed, this question is best answered by looking back to the creation of Sekban troops explained in chapter 3. The emergence of arms-bearing landless peasants is a phenomenon that, while not restricted to the Balkans, is nevertheless very typical of it, not least due to its geography. Social banditry, the study of which Eric Hobsbawm pioneered in the late 1960s (Hobsbawm 1969), was, as will be shown, crucial for the social transformation under investigation. With regards to Greece, it was

"...above all in the mountain regions, in certain towns and in certain islands, that the Greeks enjoyed almost complete autonomy. Since cavalry was not effective outside the plains, the Ottoman Turks had failed to subjugate higher regions such as Mani in southern Peloponnesus, or the Pindus-Agrafa Mountains, Vermio, Pereira, Olympus or Parnassus. ...Throughout the many mountains of Greece there were Kleftochoria (bandit villages) which were a law unto themselves" (Dakin 1973: 17).

Remarkably, however, ever since Hobsbawm's original 1969 account and despite the importance of this social phenomenon for the understanding of many transformations within international social history and the history of state formation,<sup>64</sup> no major work has yet been dedicated to this social phenomenon from within the discipline of International Relations. While this provides important openings for future research, there are already problems with Hobsbawm's famous work. Hobsbawm tends to identify bandits with revolutions (Hobsbawm 1969: 106-119).<sup>65</sup> However, at least in the Greek case, their political self-understanding as revolutionaries, let alone nationalists, has to be challenged. As will be argued here, the Brigand's struggle had

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<sup>63</sup> Here I contend with Koliopoulos' assertion about the political motivation of the Brigands: Koliopoulos (Koliopoulos 1987).

<sup>64</sup> Apart from the Greek and Anatolian cases, the most prominent historical role Brigands held was in Sicily. Here, however, the historical sociology of these original peasant movements is very extensive (Blok 1974; Sabetti 2002)

<sup>65</sup> Hobsbawm (1969: 106-119), for a critique see Blok (1972, 2001)

an apolitical character until usurped by the ‘national’ discourse. In order to revise this simplified and therefore problematic clear-cut identification of ‘Brigands with a Cause’ (Koliopoulos 1987), a more detailed glance at the variety of local ‘Greek’ bandits and brigands appears to be in order.

It has already been shown that certain social transformations led to “the end of the rural prosperity and relative peace so crucial for the well-being of an agricultural empire”. Peasant unrest was largely channelled into the creation of so-called *sekban* troops, through the spread of small, handheld firearms, even though “the transition between rebel and milita-man (and back) was easy to accomplish” (Neumann 2006: 45). The so-called *Klefts* in the Morea boasted similar social structures and akin to the Anatolian case, Greek historians generally distinguish between two kinds of arms-bearing ‘*Klefts*’: *Kapi* and *Armatoloi*. The former were in the service of Greek landowners (primates) employed to protect property not reliably secured by Ottoman law-enforcement, whilst the latter were working for the Ottoman administration itself as a local armed police force mainly to ensure tax collection, generally representing the interests of the Sultan or the local Beys. Apart from their differing *sources* of employment, these two varieties of Brigands were fairly comparable to each other in the *kind* of employment they pursued. Their structures were strictly hierarchical with the so-called *Capitanoi* constituting the undisputed leadership amongst them, holding a social status located between the Rum Millet elites and the direct producers. Both sides “employed them to protect their property, to assert their local influence, and even to carry on their feuds with rival families” (Dakin 1973: 18). With the decentralization of power starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the shift in the traditional ruling regime impacted on the exercise of politically constituted violence, however. Employment through Ottoman offices decreased while the number of privateers rose. This not only meant an increase in the number of *Kapi*, but also increased the number of landless Brigands, carrying out robberies. Both groups were in principle employed to “curb these disorders and losses of treasures” (Dakin 1973: 18) the social practice of robbery caused to ‘Greeks’ and ‘Turks’ alike. “In other words they employed brigands to put down other brigands it was not unusual to name the *Armatoli* ‘tame’ *Kelfts* as opposed to the ‘wild’ *Kelfts* who remained a law unto themselves, or outlaws pure and simply” (Dakin 1973: 18). Appropriating their military services was, therefore, a perfectly reasonable act of statecraft to either prevent them plunging into lawless practices of robbing people, or in order to ‘send a thief to catch a thief’ (Batalas 2003) – incompatible though as this may have been

with the establishment of a monopoly over the means of violence and a modern state apparatus.

Whether ‘tame’ or ‘wild’ Kleft, both groups’ sources of subsistence were threatened by the political agenda of centralization, as they were both based on the effective absence of state control. With the official forms of employment under threat by a modernizing Ottoman state, the Klefts were pushed towards the ‘wild’ form of brigandage as the sole source of their income and lived off raids on the villages. The advent of the territorial state, thus, meant, on the one hand, that these armed brigands could no longer live off sporadic raids on villages in the plains, whilst at the same time their total numbers grew. It also meant, however, that demand for their traditional modes of employment would shrink if they did not wish to subjugate themselves to the Sultan’s or any other form of, sometimes competing, state-like authority. In fact, the Klefts had attempted to circumvent both Ali Pasha’s as well as the Porte’s state building projects. Their ultimate aim was to thwart any centralization efforts altogether and continue in their semi-autonomous living conditions in the ways that had previously been guaranteed by the geography of the region. Thus, “...thousands of these warriors had literally nowhere to settle unless they entered the Napoleonic service or the service of Ali Pasha” (Dakin 1973: 44), neither of which was an attractive option to these men who were used to a high degree of autonomy. After an attempt to be recruited into the Tsar’s service failed in 1817, they started to form into an increasingly radical potential. This was not marred with a concrete political agenda other than retaining their traditional forms of subsistence based on self-rule.

This potential was nurtured by increased taxation pressures felt throughout the Ottoman Balkans. *Ciftlik* formations led to overexploitation and the consolidation of landed estates which, for most direct producers, implied a noticeable deterioration of living conditions in comparison to the traditional *timar* system. Combined with the Porte’s centralization agenda and in the light of the Sultan’s continuous geopolitical predicament, this led to a peasant flight from the arable plains. In terms of the general economic conditions, the end of the Napoleonic wars also had an immediate impact. The unusual peace in Europe revived agricultural production in Europe, which led to a slump in prices due to oversupply. This meant that agricultural revenues fell, since the Ottoman monopoly to supply the war torn European markets collapsed. “In 1820 the harvest in Western Europe reduced gains even more and left a large number of sailors in both islands unemployed and a great source of unrest” (Petropoulos 1968:

36). The number of peasants joining Klefts rose due to these deteriorating socio-economic conditions. Hence, this Kleft revolutionary potential was not released by the Etarists. In fact, using the term 'revolutionary' appears inaccurate. Rather, the highly personalised center-periphery struggle between Ali and Mahmud led many to take up opportunities as mercenaries on either side. This still does not explain, how, if at all, this pressure was transformed into a nationalist struggle, not least since the genesis of a 'Greek' identity out of this struggle was not complete until well into the twentieth century (Triandafyllidou and Paraskevopoulou 2002).

In other words, even though 'Bandits' may have constituted a potential for revolt, they usually did not develop a political direction for expressing their discontent. If political or ideological perspectives were present at all, these were not usually articulate, i.e. they can be seen, at best, as a precursor to a political transformation (Hobsbawm 1969: 106f). Arguably, this geographically secluded, uneducated class was from the outset very unlikely to channel its discontent into a project of national secession or, indeed any further reaching politico-ideological venture beyond an immediate remedy of the perceived social injustice. Their aim was simply to re-establish traditional forms of socio-economic life. Anton Blok has rightfully criticized Hobsbawm's somewhat romanticised account of social banditry, as "by themselves, social bandits lack organisational capacity" (Blok 2001: 14) or political conviction. More importantly, bandits are fickle. As Blok observes with reference to cases from Sicily, their class allegiance swiftly shifted once they entered a socially more advanced position. Far from being Hooded avengers of the poor, they were targeting landed peasants just as much as landowners (Blok 1972: 496). This equally applies to the Greek case, where social pressures led to the emergence of a dissatisfied social bandit/ex-peasant class lacking a political idiom. This, however, coincided with the import of the political project of Greek nationalism from Russia, which lacked a large domestic base of social power. These two social strands converged in a short-lived anti-Ottoman marriage of convenience under the specific socio-economic circumstances of the 1820s. As the rapturous history of post-Ottoman Greek national state formation goes to show, it lacked any coherence beyond the commonality of purpose in attempting to expel the Ottoman tax collector. Overriding the Ottoman regime promised a return to banditry that would be activity undisturbed by a centralizing state. This, on the other hand, naturally jeopardized the support of any new state. Consequently, banditry did not disappear as a result of secession.

Rather, it remained a social reality, much bemoaned by the Great Powers, as the nouveau Greece simply externalized this problem.

#### **4.7 The Social Origin of the Greek War of Independence**

The Revolution, thus, occurred in two parts of the Empire which were not only geographically, but also socially disjointed from each other. While the Principalities were plunged into revolt mostly by an Etarist/Hospodar conspiratorial coalition, the revolt in the Peloponnesus was more genuine or 'from below' and involved local power holders as well as lower classes. These, however, had no ideological links with the Etarists and their Westernized rhetoric. This explains why the revolt was unsuccessful in the Principalities, whereas the uprising in the Peloponnesus not only successfully overthrew, but also expelled the Ottoman regime. It was, thus, not due to the ideological appeal of the nationalist project, but due to the large scale incursion of Ottoman forces brought in to curb Ali Pasha of Janina in 1820 that the Kleft/Peasant revolutionary potential was increasingly mobilized. The outcome of Greek independence was not by nationalist design, but via a physical struggle emerging from the center-periphery conflict. In other words, the Greek revolt grew out of a decidedly non-national conflict between a centralizing Porte and autonomy-seeking peripheral elites in the form of Ali Pasha. The peasants who had remained on their land and had not turned into arms bearing men seemed to participate spuriously at best.

The physical struggle, far from being the logical result of an ideological nationalist penetration emanating through a modern 'Greek' system of education, has, thus, a twofold origin. First, the conflict between an autonomous local lord was combined with the material crisis of unemployed military men and landless peasants with an equally strong desire for autonomy. Both groups of actors were threatened by an increasingly monopolized modern state apparatus. This revolutionary potential did not spark simply due to the inability to find alternative modes of employment, but only gained momentum in reaction to the influx of Ottoman forces deployed to curb Ali Pasha of Janina's local power base. The fact that 'Greeks' fought on both Ali's and the Sultan's sides as mercenaries at the initial stages of the conflict goes to show that the social origin of their struggle was not so much the result of their natural nationalist inclination, but rather the conscious decision to opt for the more reliable

sources of military employment. Greek independence itself, however, did not offer this opportunity, but rather the ensuing chaos that left plenty of scope for banditry and corruption. The conservative historiography notoriously overrates the extent to which “news and ideas [which] were spread by small traders, drovers, builders and sailors (...) from the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards” (Dakin 1973: 26) could actually have a significant impact on the social fabric of the not only highly conservative, but also very fractured and particularized, ‘Greek’ community. What the Etarists and the Greek national discourse did was to *temporarily* consolidate these individual social struggles into one, short-lived, ‘coalition of the willing’. This revolt, thus, rather than simply replacing the Ottoman with a new ruling class, had the potential to lead to meaningful social change, as it “initiated a process of true social mobility through the carrying of arms, both because the function of fighting was indispensable to a society engaged in war and because of the military system of irregular warfare which prevailed” (Petropulos 1968: 73). This potential was used to overthrow the Ottoman ‘yoke’, but whether it was utilized to provide for social change remains to be seen. As Clogg observes, “the ruling elites in Greek society were so wedded to the existing status quo, however, that [any revolutionary effort] was clearly going to be no easy task” (Clogg 1979: 43). As the post-Ottoman history of Greek state formation goes to show, this was in fact a formidable task.

#### **4.8 The New Greek State**

Between November 1829 and February 1830, Russia, France and Britain decided on the future fate of the newly born Greek state at the London Conference.<sup>66</sup> After having influenced the struggle militarily in favour of the Greek movement by destroying the combined Ottoman/Egyptian fleet in October 1827 at Navarino<sup>67</sup>, the London Protocol established that an independent Kingdom of Greece was to be established and to be ruled by a monarch from a smaller European dynasty. This form of international mediation, which reconciled the powers’ reactionary demands and maintained, simultaneously, the balance of power in the region, was to become a model for the subsequent secessions from the Ottoman Empire, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania. Regardless of the international determination of the future fate of ‘Greece’,

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<sup>66</sup> For a detailed account of the international response to the Greek struggle see chapter 5.

<sup>67</sup> Many observers at the time assumed an accidental outbreak of the battle. This account concurs with the mainstream understanding of Navarino as a previously agreed and coordinated military intervention as is evidenced by the presence of the large fleet in the Aegean; see Woodhouse (1965).

there are those who see the post-Ottoman formation as the epitome of the modern state with the constitutional monarchy that came in place of the Porte creating an abstract state apparatus, thereby establishing the institutional separation of the private and the public on the one hand, and the economic and the political on the other. The advent of private property seemed to be secured by the departure of the traditional Ottoman land regime. This 'modern' state was thought to guarantee individual rights in the sense of personal independence and legal and formal equality before the law. Moreover, the institution of private property was guaranteed by the departure and expropriation of the majority of Muslim landlords. According to conservative Greek historiography, this was the result of a popular 'Greek' will for democracy and modern Western institutions - including institutions of representative democracy - which were genetically poised to revive the Athenian heritage. These tendencies were subdued first by the Ottomans and later by the foreign implemented Bavarian Regime, which "showed little sympathy for the aspirations of those who had actually fought for independence...[and] showed little sensitivity to Greek tradition in fashioning the institutions of the new state after western European models" (Clogg 1992: 49). Once left to the 'authentic' Greek revolutionary agents after the coup d'état against King Otho in October 1862, and especially after the First World War, however, institutions developed which supposedly "marked a continuity between classical and modern Greece through the intermediary of the Greek Enlightenment movement" (Triandafyllidou and Paraskevopoulou 2002: 79).

Contrary to this opinion, it has been argued here that a territorially consolidated 'Greek' state had no historical antecedent which this idea of Hellenic linearity could have been built upon.<sup>68</sup> To the extent that a tradition of democratic institutions was revived, those were far from universally implemented or accepted. This sheds doubt on the assumption that post-Ottoman Greece revived an 'old' tradition of democracy. The following will look at various political institutions and developments after the departure of the Ottoman forces and examine their purportedly modern character, especially with regards to the existence of an abstract, de-personal state apparatus in a Weberian sense. This will show that the emerging Greek state failed to introduce modern sovereignty. The attempts that were made in this direction were met with fierce local resistance as it disrupted traditional ways of life in a way

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<sup>68</sup> Pre-Ottoman 'Greek' sovereign structures could include the system of the Rum Millet, the Byzantine Empire and the Classical system of dispersed city states, none of which have institutional similarities with the 19<sup>th</sup> century Greek formation, which, as will be shown, developed only slowly into what could be called 'sovereign maturity' well into the twentieth century.



comparable to the Ottoman efforts. In particular, the changes implemented by the Bavarian bureaucrats who tried to introduce a “centralized government and bureaucracy [which] now submitted both landowners and peasants to a common dependence on the local representatives of a distant and unsympathetic authority” (Campbell and Sherrard 1968: 83) were contested. Whether this new authority was supposed to be Turkish, European, Greek or Ottoman in ‘ethnic’ origin arguably did not matter, for on the one hand, there was no developed concept of ethnicity at the time. On the other hand, the problem was not so much with the cultural or ethnic colour of authority, but much more with a centralized political authority as such. The conventional wisdom, however, tends to discount the extent to which the Greek insurrection had its origin precisely in the attempt to evade a centralizing regime. The center-periphery conflict so vital for understanding the process of disintegration itself was, thus, not solved or obliterated by the secession. Rather, it was reconfigured under a different guise with the fundamental conflicting lines between a landed Ancient Regime in the form of the primates and a modernizing central bureaucracy in form of the so-called *Bavarocracy* remaining intact. In other words, it was the foreign ruler’s desire to “suppress the local bandit-rulers and construct a modern centralized state [which] rejected the Byzantine Ottoman tradition in favour of a revival of classical Greece” (Roudemotof 2001: 102) rather than a local native aspiration for reviving the Classical heritage which became the engine of social transformation in this post-Ottoman polity.

#### **4.8.1 Institutions**

Initially this might seem an unfair assessment of the post-Ottoman Greek situation. Even though still in the midst of the war effort, new political structures still emerged. A National Assembly was called in 1827, which duly elected Count Capodistrias as the first President of Greece when he arrived on 7 January 1828. His agenda was indeed to modernize and centralize the state. To no one’s surprise, however, in doing so he stirred up the very conflict looming from the outset. Once European interference brought a reasonable prospect of success to the revolt, the struggle for political (re)organization in post-Independence Greece was in full swing. This conflict, as was outlined above, was characterized by the continuous conflict between the conservatives and progressive/liberals, or the ‘Romeic’ and the ‘Hellenic’ factions. It is the latter, though, whose social composition, origin and, above all, motivation appears more obscure and contradictory, whereas the former can be

relatively clearly identified as the 'old Regime' of the Rum Millet. The Hellenists were keen to centralize power early on, while the local notables were eager to retain their local power base. In either model, political participation was meant to be restrictive which reflected a widely held assumption across the whole political spectrum of the early national Greek elites that "'subversive' and 'demagogic' theories associated with the French Revolution and particularly with its radical phase were never allowed to reach the people, let alone to influence statecraft" (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2002: 22). Any move towards a truly popular form of political participation in government was not only subdued due to a desire to retain established bases of social power and vested interest, but also since radical social transformation was deemed unacceptable by most European powers, first and foremost by Greece's natural ally, Russia.

#### **4.8.2 The Megali Idea**

The Megali Idea irredentist policy, aiming at the expansion of the Greek polity into a revived Byzantine Empire, took hold within Greece as "the sole source of internal unity in a politically fragmented society" (Campbell and Sherrard 1968: 91). Trained as a Russian diplomat and loyal to the principles of *Realpolitik*, Capodistrias had, for good reason, attempted to convince various political constituencies of the need for internal consolidation and territorial saturation, putting on hold, if not to rest, this 'Great Idea'. However, as geopolitically wise as this may have been, it was nevertheless socially problematic, for on the one hand disunity persisted and eventually cost Capodistrias his life. On the other hand, territorial saturation prevented a regulation of the bandit's inimical position towards the state. The Megali Idea would have provided an opportunity to channel the traditional revenue generating activities of the irregular forces – village raids – by equipping them with an ideological superstructure which would allow for raids across the Ottoman-Greek frontier, while at the same time, galvanizing and subordinating them to a greater Greek irredentist national agenda. This way, however, banditry continued to constitute one social problem for the young state – amongst many others (Tzanelli 2002).

#### **4.8.3 The Regency**

Not least under the impression of this disunity which identified the Greek state as a source of geopolitical unrest and instability, the London Conference decided to

impose a foreign monarch. In the midst of the post-Ottoman internal struggle, the Vienna system imported its own model of sovereignty, i.e. a European dynasty, which, at that time also meant the introduction of an autocratic version of 'modernity', strictly based on a backward vision of dynasticism. The introduction of a Bavarian administration in the spirit of the Vienna reaction has to be seen as an attempt to circumvent the ideological appeal of liberal enlightened nationalism and the social change that this might imply. However, just as Capodistrias' administration caused wide-spread resentment amongst large parts of the population, so was the Bavarian attempt to govern modern Greece in a Western European, i.e. neo-Absolutist fashion destined to trigger recognizable resistance. In consequence, exactly 31 years after Capodistrias' assassination on October 7 1831, the first Greek monarch, King Otho, was ousted by an angry mob and was forced to return to his native Bavaria in October 1862. This should not be read as evidence, however, that deposing Bavarian rule marked the end of the ongoing center-periphery conflict.

Initially, the Bavarian Regency's (1832- 1862) efforts to create a constitutional monarchy encountered equally strong opposition, even though it had been well aware of the strong provincial powers it needed to incorporate into the new state. Nevertheless, "Bavarian state-making encountered strong resistance from almost all the elements of Greek society but especially from the local oligarchies, the clergy, the primates, and the captains of the irregular formations". Most crucially, the Bavarian efforts to incorporate the irregulars into a new standing army proved difficult. "The majority of captains and their bands were neither incorporated into the paramilitary units nor actually desired to be so incorporated" (Batalas 2003: 160-162).

Faced with so much opposition, the Regency tried to calm the restless spirits by introducing a constitution in 1844 in reaction to an attempted overthrow. Somewhat unsurprisingly, this constitution was, according to Campbell and Sherrard "anything but liberal in spirit" (Campbell and Sherrard 1968: 86), retaining political prerogatives with the King, who governed more through his minister Ionnais Kolettis (1773-1847), "who had studied the art of patronage and intrigue" during his time in Ali Pasha's court. These skills of statecraft were desperately needed by the new King, whose popularity was far from supreme. Indeed, "...the fact that the regency and the king were not Orthodox and the suppression of the local bandits (...) created the widespread impression of an attack on Orthodox traditions" (Roudemotof 2001: 104).

This was, of course, no misperception. After all, attempting to change the political and social structures that were traditionally defined by Orthodox religion could always be read as an attack on Orthodoxy itself. Accordingly, there were not less than 14 peasant revolts during the Regency, most of which “were a reaction against taxation or were incited by local overlords who demanded financial rewards from the state” (Roudemotof 2001: 104). This state, however, was no longer ‘Turkish’, but independent and Greek. Hence, resistance was arguably not against the Catholicism of the Bavarian King, but against political centralization and a functioning fiscal regime in general.

Kolettis, aware of these local sensitivities, attempted to form a power-base for the young and foreign monarch by building “a popular following by openly corrupt methods which he justified by the observation that parliamentary democracy was unsuited to the conditions of Greek society” (Campbell and Sherrard 1968: 86f). Public offices in parliament, government and regional administration were sold to the highest bidder. Kolettis thus introduced a system of office venality typical of European neo-absolutist dynasties, which in Greece, as in Europe, effectively restored the power of established primates within a ‘modern’ centralized bureaucracy and provided the institutional infrastructure for a compromise between the King and the local power holders within, what Clogg calls, a ‘parliamentary dictatorship’ (Clogg 1992: 52). As for the Klefts, Otho and Kolettis also devised a strategy to incorporate them into the state. On the one hand, he paid them to rig the democratic elements imposed onto him by the 1844 constitution. As a result, bandits supported the King’s power base by starting “to terrorize electors to cast their votes as they ought to, or at least to prevent opponents from reaching the ballot-boxes, but also from time to time in the more honourable work of creating disorder on the Turkish frontier...In return for these commissions brigands enjoyed the protection of their political patrons if they were arrested for crimes...” (Campbell and Sherrard 1968: 88). As a result, only 12 out of the 53 elected opposition deputies physically survived the King’s inventive election campaign. Secondly, as opposed to Capodistrias, King Otho was a staunch supporter of the Megali Idea, even though he was forced by outside powers, including Russia, to compromise on the territorial ambitions of the state, thus making him the visible and disliked impediment to Greek territorial aggrandizement.<sup>69</sup> This

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<sup>69</sup> For an overview over Greek territorial acquisitions after 1821 see map no. 2 in the appendix.

resentment grew out of proportion to the degree that King Otho was taken out of office in a bloodless coup in 1862.

The fact that the Greek throne was artificially created and imposed from outside did not imply that it was merely a powerless institution of representation. Despite not having direct land-ownership, the early twentieth century dynastic practice of Europe, where both Otho and his successor George had their origin, was implemented in Greece in a similar fashion through personalized office venality and their autocratic style of government. This distribution of power in favour of a coalition between landholding elites and a foreign monarch, equally was no accident or result of the King's ruthless pursuit of personal benefit, but by design of the guarantor Powers. Aware of the weight the new Hellenic dynasty carried, not least with regard to its geostrategic position, France, Britain and Russia passed a balance of power clause in the London Protocol of 1830 which clearly banned any member of the Concert from occupying the Greek throne. This limitation was reflected in the selection of Kings from the smaller dynasties of Wittelsbach and Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg.

#### **4.8.4 The Personalized Politics of 'Modern' Greece**

The political landscape after the War of Independence can be characterized as follows: On the one hand, "the old patrons or oligarchs had little difficulty in exploiting and strengthening the clientage system to thwart the attempts to impose a European or modern political system". On the other hand, these attempts were half hearted in the sense that they were emulating a form of absolutist rule, meaning "the political sphere was not sharply differentiated from the spheres of social and personal relations" (Psomiades 1976: 150). This situation was to endure well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century even after the introduction of constitutional monarchies, parliamentary elections, the political participation of at least some social groups and the development of a professional bureaucracy that led to the gradual formation of a bourgeois middle class. However, due to the persistence of office venality, this new professional/bourgeois class did not represent a "radically different political type" and so "the system of local notabilities and patronage persisted, particularly in the countryside where the majority of the electorate still lived" (Campbell and Sherrard 1968: 113). This meant that these new professionals and state structures developing under Capodistrias and King Otho focussed mainly "upon the management of

conflicts within the framework of the ruling class” (Kostis 2005: 21) as direct descendants of the Rum Millet. This may, however, not necessarily constitute a big revelation, for these political structures and socially entrenched vested interests expectedly will not change over a brief period of time. Thus, even conservative historians admit, that “Patron-client relationships permeated society at all levels and, indeed, have continued to be a pronounced feature of society until the present” (Clogg 1992: 60f).

What this goes to show, though, is the fact that national secession cannot be understood as a form of social revolution but has to be seen as the obliteration of the perceivably ‘foreign’, i.e. Muslim, element from society as well as ending a semi-tributary relation with an unloved, yet more and more assertive central Ottoman administration. This equally lends support to the assumption that post-Independence Greece was not, for a long time, a modern state in the sense of an ideal-typical separation of the private from the public. Due to the continuing problem of Klefts raiding the Greco-Ottoman border, much resented by Britain as it was (Tzanelli 2002), the Greek state effectively retained a military frontier (Kostis 2005: 21-22) which found its most far-reaching and radical expression in the Megali Idea. Land ownership, on the other hand, was still pooled amongst the established competing clans from the Greek ‘old regime’, made up of primates, the captains, the clergy and the shipbuilding and seafaring merchant dynasties from the Aegean.

So if there were an impetus for a ‘real’ modernisation of political rule, this must have come from outside, namely from the guarantor powers, rather than from within the conflict-ridden and politically disunited indigenous ‘Greek’ society. After the assassination of Capodistrias it was left to the Bavarian Regents to ‘modernize’ the state. In doing so, however, it introduced the Bavarian model to its full extent, i.e. it retained personalised rule and dynasticism within modern territorial rule. In other words, it was a half hearted revolution from outside, rather than above, or even below, since the ideals of Greek nationalism were introduced by an exile Russian born and trained elite and actual state modernization was carried out by the guarantor powers. Thus, Greece during the Othonian time appears to have undergone only marginal social transformation with the Rum Millet power structures essentially remaining intact, save for the Bavarians. This observation should not be confused, however, with the argument frequently made by nationalist Greek historiography

which claims that Greek development was only held back by outside intervention. If anything, it was outside intervention that gave the only, if weak, impetus for change.

#### **4.8.5 Capitalist (under)development**

Moreover, this absence of change is also reflected in the continuing underdevelopment that is fairly unanimously accepted within Greek historiography. There appears little evidence to suggest a meaningful capitalist transformation prior to the consolidation of the Greek state in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century had taken place. During Ottoman rule, “productive industry beyond the scale of simple workshops (...) was absent” (Campbell and Sherrard 1968: 92; Sakellarpoulos 1985). Production was generally limited to shipbuilding and textile, and a large-scale commodification of land and labour was absent, not least given the contentious property issues that lasted well into the independence era. The socio-historical reality of Greek backwardness is, thus, usually not subject to debate and accepted across a wide variety of Greek and Balkan historiography. Most economic historians agree that, if anything, post-Independence Greece can be understood as Michael Palairret put it, “evolution without development” (Mouzelis 1978; Palairret 1989).

A more controversial debate evolved around the competing explanations for this lack of development. Unsurprisingly, Greek nationalist historiography, in a culturalist tradition, locates backwardness in the corruption and social stationariness<sup>70</sup> the Ottoman ‘interference’ had inflicted on the Greek natural propensity to grow and prosper as an intrinsically European society. Similarly, post-Independence backwardness is thought to have been caused by an impending interference of the same European powers whose societies the young state was trying to emulate in its effort to catch up. The Hellenic liberation paradigm remains true to its emphasis on the Greek mercantile class as the only agents of change. However, as was shown earlier, these classes occupied a less than central space in the revolt, with many of them even opposing it outright. This view is further substantiated by the fact that even after independence the centres of ‘Greek’ commerce were still outside of the borders of the new state, namely Istanbul and Smyrna (today’s Izmir) (Örs 2006). The revolt, rather than being the carefully coordinated result of a bourgeois ‘Dream Nation’, developed out of the uncoordinated anti-Ottoman activities of unsuccessful merchants by the Black Sea, Greek nobility in Russian service, local power magnates in the

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<sup>70</sup> The concept of social stationariness in relation to ‘the Orient’ is identified by Bryan S. Turner as specific to utilitarian and Marxist social theory, see Turner (1974); see also Chapter 1, pp 40-43.

Morea and bandits on the loose (Vergopoulos 1978). Most economic activity within the new state continued to be highly traditional family farming. Moreover, where large landed estates had been established, these were tightly controlled by the primates who continued to impede social change.

Development and social change was, therefore, either entirely absent or very slow due to what can be called the ‘persistence of the old regime’. Even though the Ottoman expulsion was coordinated by exile nationalists, it was still considered desirable by the old local regime, even though their desire for wider social change was limited to say the least. As a consequence, the dynastic revolution from outside was increasingly infiltrated by the old regime. As Mouzelis observes, these old elites started taking over “the expanding state apparatus and to gear the whole political system to the safeguarding and promotion of their interests” (Mouzelis 1978: 14). In the meantime their struggle with the liberals, aiming at a transition towards a modern state, a foreign imposed quasi-absolutist ruler and the preservation of local vested interest degenerated into a full scale civil war in the aftermath of the War of Independence. Thus, economic growth and capitalist development only occurred after the first major geopolitical challenge forced consolidation onto the old regime. After the Crimean War and the ousting of King Otho in 1862 “...Greece experienced a considerable expansion of her economy during the last four decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century” (Campbell and Sherrard 1968: 96). Thus, the newly independent Greece, like its former Ottoman supra-state before, can be seen as a classical late-comer. This was not the result of Ottoman mis-rule, however, as secession, if anything, delayed the process of catching up rather than epitomizing it.

#### *The Issue of the National Estates*

In light of the absence of development, and in line with the argument about the persistence of the old regime, a preservation of the traditional Ottoman Rum Millet land regime could have been expected. This was, however, not the case as the expulsion of Muslim landlords during the revolt created a large availability of land, which was thought to have constituted a unique chance to distribute wealth as a means of creating a more equitable society and to initiate social change contemporaneously with national independence. The land issue, i.e. the question as to how to distribute large amounts of valuable land, is more commonly known as the question of the ‘National Estates’. The outcome of this inevitably conflictual distribution process and the degree to which it did or did not generate social change



can, thus, be seen as a litmus test for the viability of the liberation paradigm's claim about the historical co-incidence of social transformation and secession. According to the conventional story, the National Lands "...came under the direct control of the state. In addition, the state directly controlled all the land that had not been officially granted by the Ottoman Empire and...[thus]...impeded on the development of a class of large landowners..." (Batalas 2003: 167).

Initially, this begs the question as to which state is supposed to have controlled the distribution given either the complete absence, the lack of stability or the personalized nature of the young Greek political institutions. This narrative, rather than reflecting the actual historical realities, is based on an ideal type development envisaged in Capodistrias' best laid plans, which, however, went awfully wrong. These plans had intended, on the one hand, to compensate for their efforts the Brigands who had fought in the uprising. However, this was not meant as a form of material compensation, but also as a sign that the revolt had actually kept its promise of transforming the society. On the other hand, a widespread distribution of small parcels of land was intended to prevent the accumulation of large estates and the associated emergence of independent centers of power, which, as the Ottoman experience had shown, crippled any state's centralizing efforts.

While it was clear that the re-distribution of Ottoman lands was not easily achievable, the complete failure of the program is still remarkable. This was partly due to an attempt by primates to expand their own holdings, which, in turn, was motivated more by the potential social effects of land distribution, than straightforward material benefit. Their rationale was that any peasant freeholdings would immediately threaten a reaction of those peasants working on the primate's holdings: "Hence, the frozen status of the 'national estates' and the continuing tenant status of their cultivators served as a barrier against a force which, once set in motion, could have resulted in a fundamental reordering of the entire landholding regime and the social order based on it" (McGrew 1976: 126). While there is agreement that large scale land distribution in the end did not occur until 1871, disagreement about the cause for it persists. The liberation paradigm argues that redistribution efforts were thwarted by Bavarian indifference, while, previously the true liberal and egalitarian intentions of Count Capodistrias were thwarted simply by his 'untimely death' (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2002: 166).<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Capodistria's attempts to distribute land had challenged many vested interests. As such, his assassination is better described as the outcome of a conflict with the primates, rather than a

Critical approaches, on the other hand, emphasize the continuous social strength of vested interests as the reason behind the lack of transformation. At the same time, the land was needed to create revenue, first for the war effort and later for the construction of the thus far non-existing and fragile centralized military and fiscal infrastructure. Short-term revenue could best be generated by selling the National Estates, or, more commonly, to use them as securities for gaining further loans from the City of London - an act of what McGrew called financial incompetence of the young state (McGrew 1976: 127). Even the large-scale redistribution of land that did occur in 1871 was of limited effectiveness. The further territorial expansion of Greece in 1881 via a formal purchase of land from the Ottoman Empire in Thessaly after the Treaty of Berlin provided some relief on this issue. Turkish landlords were outsold by wealthy diaspora Greeks, a transaction which was based on the emerging notion of private property both within Ottoman and Greek jurisdictions. This was followed by a full expropriation of peasants by removing the Ottoman legal structures that had previously safeguarded their rights to usufruct, thereby turning them into waged labourers, sometimes worsening their conditions dramatically. We can speak here of a form of Greek enclosure which marks the eventual transformation towards capitalist agriculture. This capitalist transformation, however, brought with it new forms of exploitation which “were at times so oppressive that many Greek peasants crossed the northern borders to resettle in the Ottoman Empire” (Batalas 2003: 168).

#### **4.8.6 Between ‘Border’ and ‘Frontier’**

Peasant migration was one form of reaction to the introduction of capitalist social relations. The other we have already seen, was a return to brigandage. Their continued strength proved to be one of the more formidable challenges for consolidating the Greek state, both socially but also territorially. Brigands, as Batalas observes, had successfully undermined three previous attempts to form a regular army due to their “hostility (...) toward the formation of regular military units that would bolster the authority of the emerging nation state” (Batalas 2003: 157). This hostility was encouraged by their desire to uphold their freedom to bear arms for the purpose of generating revenue at their will, thus putting them into a similar relation towards the new Greek state as towards the Ottoman centralizing regime. For them, “political independence was not a goal that was actually pursued” even though “the War of

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misfortunate and ‘untimely’ coincidence. From the primates’ point of view his death was timed rather well.

Independence became (...) an opportunity for achieving greater economic and political power within their individual jurisdictions” (Batalas 2003: 157). This explains their participation in the overall struggle. However, this willingness was conditional upon their success to prevent a unified nation-state and a centralized army formidable enough to break their arms-bearing power-base. As a result, Capodistrias and Otho devised a strategy of co-opting the captains rather than outright disarming them. Whilst this appears to have been the only feasible option at the time, the offer to turn a blind eye towards continued banditry practices instead of trying to absorb irregulars into a standing army was also with an eye to using them in future geopolitical encounters. Nevertheless this policy resulted in “...the modern Greek state’s inability to impose a monopoly of the means of coercion” (Batalas 2003: 150). This led to a process Achilles Batalas labels ‘inverse racketeering’, i.e. a situation where the state, rather than imposing a monopoly over the means of violence, tries to monopolize the already existing means of violence by purchasing man power whether needed or not. Thus, “the ‘racketeers’ (i.e. bandits-irregulars) provided the state, via a patron-client relationship, with protection against themselves and other bandits” (Batalas 2003: 150). It was, therefore, exactly these units which were the only ones capable of confronting the Ottoman forces and supplying the state with military vitality. Given the absence of any functioning or efficient fiscal system to pay them, their revenue was either generated in the traditional, destabilizing ways, or, by channelling their form of subsistence outwards. This resulted in an active encouragement of raids on the Ottoman border. The only element of Greek society that had constituted a proto-‘revolutionary’ fighting force was not incorporated into the new state and found itself in exactly the same social position as prior to the revolt. Externalizing the bandits’ mode of reproduction in fact meant that the ‘modern’ Greek border reverted to the military frontier the Ottoman Empire had started to ‘close’ from 1699 onwards. This meant that Greece was a distinctly pre-modern social form which continued to engage in a weakened form of geopolitical accumulation. This incomplete transition, reflected in the Megali Idea, had a dramatic impact on the new state’s external relations and, by extension, the history of subsequent state formations in the entire region.

The persistence of irregulars and the need to incorporate them into what was to become the ‘modern’ Greek state meant that from 1827 up until 1923, territorial expansion, either in the form of occasional border raids, or, in form of the Megali

Idea, were a socio-economically conditioned, essential characteristic of the Greek polity. Both of these state-forming strategies stood at odds with the international system to which this new state owed its existence. "...Considering that the Protecting Powers were unwilling to support Greek irredentist policies, Greek state elites searched for the right circumstances to assault the Ottoman Empire" (Batalas 2003: 166). Those Powers, tired of the unruly nature of the new border, continued piracy in the Aegean as well as their own agents' exposure to frequent robberies, eventually tried to coerce their young client state into maintaining the international balance of power. This culminated in the Royal Navy blockade of Greek ports in January 1850. Palmerstone's rather short-sighted policy, however, created the detrimental effect of an even heavier reliance of Otho's regime on Russian support. As a response to the constraints imposed by Britain,<sup>72</sup> Greek officials, well aware of the origin of the problem and their complicity in it, blamed the persistence of banditry as a social phenomenon on Ottoman sabotage, rather than on the lack of social integration. As a result, the bandits served "in the Neohellenic imaginary both as a "scourge" and as a demonstration of Greek irredentist heroism, a dangerous "disease" and an almost innate Greek virtue" (Tzanelli 2002: 49). In their social reality and despite their hypothetically advanced social position as 'liberators', secure employment in the new Greek state was only scarcely offered and integration was still only gradual. Nevertheless, this coincidence between the rise of a socially disadvantaged, potentially violent class and a national project set in motion the latter's incomplete conversion from outlaws to the military establishment of the newly formed nation-state. The fact that social integration, slow as it may have been, eventually did occur, differentiates the Greek bandits markedly from their more famous Sicilian counterparts featuring in Blok's account. Lacking such a state defining heroic role, the Sicilians operate within the interstices of an Italian state to this day.<sup>73</sup>

With the Crimean War, the consolidation of bandits took place as demand for their services rose again. It is, thus, only with the, so to speak, second Greek revolution, i.e. the overthrow of King Otto in 1862, that more meaningful social

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<sup>72</sup> Amongst those were budgetary restrictions on military spending. Due to outstanding loans Britain was in a particularly powerful position to control Greek finances. The same applied to the Ottoman Empire whose finances were managed directly by Britain and France from 1875 onwards.

<sup>73</sup> See Blok (1974). The Irish liberation struggle is often claimed to have similar social origins and a political integration of the IRA as well as the ending of its criminal operations remains a political issue. Equally, the Kosovan Liberation Army (UÇK) is frequently charged by Serbian politicians of being in effect the military arm of organized crime, rather than a political or independence movement.

change, albeit only gradually, set in. Indeed, this social change was, according to Kostis, primarily conditioned by the shifting geopolitical dynamics around the young Kingdom, most importantly after the Crimean War. This change mostly consisted in the shifting of the geopolitical focus from the Ottoman Empire to the Balkans. This was substantiated by a series of national schisms within the previously united Orthodox Church. The creation of an autocephalous Greek Church and the denial of the Patriarchate was indeed a contentious issue not only domestically, where conservative forces saw it as a Protestant or Catholic conspiracy. These national schisms also involved a geopolitical dimension, however, which was tightly connected to Slavophobic tendencies within the new state. Greece's Slav neighbours had already formed sub-forms of Orthodoxy prior to the establishment of the Greek autocephalous church, albeit with the Patriarchate's and Ottoman consent. This already constituted a break within the Rum Millet, but, in the light of Ottoman collapse matured into a regional conflict, mostly over the Macedonian question. Having come under pressure from both Serbian but more so from Bulgarian aspirations, which exceedingly clashed with the Megali Idea and the social need for irredentism, the new Greece, at least temporarily, considered a rapprochement with the Ottoman Empire, considered the lesser evil in the face of a Pan-Slavist threat (Campbell and Sherrard 1968: 103). The Ottoman Empire was weak and depended on the same European powers as Greece, whereas Pan-Slavism was backed by the continuously aggressive Russian ambitions, which were more virulent than ever since the new Greece, even though being strongly Orthodox, tended to disappoint Russian expectations as an ally.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

As the preceding brief overview over the struggle for independence has shown, liberation is a problematic concept if applied to the Greek case. The only liberation that doubtlessly took place is the liberation from the Ottoman tax collector. As for the social structure of the new polity, the major change consisted in the departure of the Muslim part of the population, landlords and peasants alike. The fact that the former had held a considerable part of landed property provided an opportunity for social transformation in the form of the National Estates, which were not seized.

The 'social fuel' of the secession, bandits and landless peasants, on the other hand, were "too poor, too religious, and too well-integrated into the Ottoman society"

(Kasaba 2003: 2) to respond to the call of the European intellectuals to raise their arms. Their motivation was a different one. This was shown by their lack of cooperation in the creation of a central authority, which was unable to incorporate into the new state. State building turned out to be difficult as it was confronted with a “complex problem of centrifugal sectionalism, which had formed the social background of the repeated civil wars that had almost ruined the War of Independence (1821-8)” (Kitromilides 1994: 162). The social change that did occur was, thus, limited to eroding the ‘Turkish’ part of the ruling Ottoman regime as well as channelling the still powerful established ‘Greek’ vested interests into the foreign imposed institutions of the new polity. “Insofar it is considered self-evident that transition takes place through the adoption of a new institutional framework by the revolution, while at a local level the structures of power remain unaltered, riddled with patronage exchanges and the attempt to appropriate the state apparatus” (Kostis 2005: 19). The chaotic and continuously violent aftermath of the Greek secession in comparison with the earlier Ottoman practices goes to show that “the Sultan had the well-being of his Christian subjects at heart, for they were one of the chief sources of the imperial revenues, and if he failed, as he often did, to curb administrative malpractices and petty tyranny in the provinces, it was not because he was tyrannical himself but because (...) his writ had ceased to run in the extremities of his realm” (Dakin 1973: 20).

As patronage and clientelism persisted, the political decision making process – especially elections – remained violent in character. As already established under the Othonian regime, parliamentary elections regularly plunged into a form of “civil war” (Campbell and Sherrard 1968: 100). Nevertheless it is evident that from the 1880’s onwards the eventual turn towards state modernization was engineered by a native class of professional elites acting as real ‘revolutionary agents’. Thus, after an unsuccessful ‘revolution from outside’, Greece eventually underwent, after the emergence of a bourgeois class of “professional men and salaried clerks working in financial, commercial, and government institutions” (Campbell and Sherrard 1968: 98) its very own ‘revolution from above’. Hence, almost 100 years after Selim III had initiated a comparable process, the newly established state converged on a similar developmental route when effective state centralisation was realized through a variety of fiscal and infrastructural measures introduced by the new Prime Minister, Charilaos Tricoupis (1832-1896).

### *Greek State Formation and the National*

In terms of the applicability of theories of nationalism, this means that not only did a social transformation that would merit the label of a revolution not take place, but also that the social conditions for the emergence of a 'national' de-personal political subjectivity were absent. Post-Independence Greece was not a modern or even industrial society and social relations remained localized as well as personalized. Secession, in other words, did not turn subjects into citizens. Rather, by eradicating the layer of autonomy and local self-rule inherent in the Ottoman Millet system, it created a stronger, and widely resented 'national', but foreign constitutional monarch further strengthening local particularism. The social origin of the secessionist dynamic was not a direct expression or product of nationalism as explained by modernist theories of nationalism. In the case of Greece, this relation between nationalism, as an abstract intellectual construct and the vested interests as the concrete social reality is neatly demonstrated by the conflict within the emerging modern state, torn by the dilemma between the Hellenic Enlightenment and the Ancient Regime of the Rum Millet.

The identification of a clear and coherent liberal Greek national project overlooks many aspects relating to the origins of the struggle. It assumes the imminent spread of an enlightened national ideology from its conception in Europe into the Balkans<sup>74</sup> with an immediate impact on an inherently trans-national merchant class and a presumably largely uneducated peasant people. Greek nationalism is developed by an exile mercantile class and nobility who stand in the Russian and other European courts' services (Harlaftis 2005). The 'export' of this ideology to the perceived Greek homeland was by and large unsuccessful because it lacked any native social base. Nationalism's source of strength was neither the Enlightenment nor capitalist penetration, but a coalition of Klefts, Armatoloi and primates, concerned with retaining, or re-establishing their bases of social power. The absence of a large following and the restriction of the nationalist discourse to exile elites constitute evidence that the national element of the revolt neither indicates, let alone explains social change.

Equally, being Muslim/Turkish is considered indistinguishable from being a surplus-extracting landowner in the Greek liberation paradigm. This obscures that

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<sup>74</sup> Even accounts which generally mobilize the conventional account of a real-existing bourgeois/capitalist transformation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman economy, admit that this did not necessarily entail a politico-ideological penetration of Enlightenment thought and if so, only in a 'retarded' fashion. See Fischer-Galati (1975); for a more open-ended argument about the relevance of Liberalism for the Balkan transitions see Mishkova (2006).

these distinctions were far from clear cut, but were multi-faceted and more complex than modern ethnic divisions. Rather than speaking of a clear historical, cultural, political, economic and technological rupture between a 'backward' Oriental-Ottoman regime and a 'modern' Enlightened Greek state, it appears to be more appropriate to conceive of a long-term trajectory, a *process* from pre-modern to modern sovereignty within which the secession does not represent the great leap forward. Theories of nationalism are therefore not necessarily inadequate in general. However, they do not apply to this particular historical setting of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire because they pre-suppose a transformation as causal that has not taken place in southeastern Europe.

This, naturally, begs the question as to what *does* explain the 'national' and territorial differentiation of 1821 that developed out of this social struggle. Even though most forms of social identification remained locally grounded, one significant transformation did take place. The kind of international homology imposed in the Greek case, was neither the Enlightenment or capitalist modernity, nor a functional derivative thereof, nationalism, but the physical and territorial dissection of mutually antagonistic homogenous communities through the application of mass political violence. Atrocities and campaigns of mass killings committed against Christian and Muslim civilians alike by the belligerent parties not only reciprocally aggravated processes of ethnic cleansing, but also motivated, in part, the involvement of international powers in the conflict. Here, Mahmud's scheme to invite French-trained Egyptian forces to the battle field in reward for sharing the spoils of the war with Egypt's Albanian vassal, Mohammed Ali, proved particularly counter-productive.<sup>75</sup> It was the atrocities committed by these much more effective (in a negative sense) troops that not only further fuelled the spiral of mass violence, but was also the main reason for the international intervention without which the Greek insurrection would not have been successful.

More importantly still, this led to the consolidation of two opposing forms of clearly distinguishable 'national' communities. What had been a matter of faith now became a matter of exclusive territorial control. Hence, Muslims became 'Turks' and Christians became 'Greeks', both attached to a distinct territory thus creating the conditions of internal hierarchy and external anarchy. Even though a full reciprocal ethnic purification was not achieved until the population exchange in 1923, the War

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<sup>75</sup> Not least since Ali's later campaigns against the Sultan were triggered by a frustration with the lack of financial or territorial rewards from the Greek adventure.



of Independence set in motion what Heather Rae called ‘pathological homogenization’ (not that there is a non-pathological form of homogenization) of a subject people. On the one hand, it seems difficult to associate this violent process with political emancipation, the Enlightenment or any other form of human progress (Rae 2002: Chapter 1). On the other hand, this should not be confused with ‘ordering’ the international through violence (cf. Kalyvas, Masoud et al. 2008).

Thus, even if this transformation is non-national, non-capitalist and pre-modern, it is far away from being irrelevant. It matters decisively, not only as a critical historiographic contribution to the reconstruction of the Greek secession, but also for the discipline of IR. For it delimits from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the nature of further social transactions by forming clear and unambiguous delimitations of distinguishable ‘societies’. This not only means that between 1821 and 1833 the social acquires, for the first time, a national definition. Rather, the modern concept of ‘society’ itself becomes historical reality for the first time. Arguably, the Greek secession not only re-formulates the ontology of ‘society’, it generates it. By extension, this is equally true for ‘the inter-national’. Relations between distinguishable ‘societies’ create an identifiable, anarchical realm of inter-action.

Beyond the historical constitution of the central ontologies of IR, the war of independence also set in motion a geopolitical dynamic unique to southeastern Europe. It established the geopolitical ‘layout’ of the region that was to become the ‘Powder Keg’. Greek territorial ambitions, the origins of which have been clarified above, led to another attempt at implementing the Megali Idea, repeated again during the 1974 putsch in the Republic of Cyprus. Thus, it led to a variety of geopolitical encounters with the Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Turkey and a variety of Balkan states without which the future development and state formations in the region would be incomprehensible. This goes to show that 1821 is not only the beginning of an independent Greece, but equally represents the emergence of a new international system in the region.

This is not to say, however, that geopolitical dynamics prior to 1821 did not influence the region’s development. The Greek secession did not occur in isolation from its geopolitical and world economic environment. In other words, the Greek national insurrection is not intelligible without developing an understanding of “the country’s [or rather: the Ottoman’s] participation in the interstate system” (Kostis 2005: 30) at the time. This participation in the already established, dominant European interstate system, which gave a new quality to the pre-existing social

conflicts within the Ottoman Empire, will be looked at in more detail in the following chapter.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> While the inter-national system between Absolutist powers matured within the Great Powers of Europe at the time, southeastern Europe and the Middle East only started a gradual transformation towards a similar territorial, inter-state system. As a result, the international does not enter the explanation as a general abstraction derived from multiplicity but rather as a concrete manifestation of Absolutist European inter-state relations on the one hand and as an emerging system of late Ottoman national movements on the other. This generates a specific set of relations and dynamics which cannot be subsumed under a single ontology.

## 5 Peter's Testament vs. British Hegemony

### The Great Powers and the Greek secession

*We must progress as much as possible in the direction of Constantinople and India. ... We must hasten the downfall of Persia, push on to the Persian Gulf, if possible re-establish the ancient commercialities with the Levant through Syria, and force our way into the Indies, which are the storehouses of the world. Once there, we can dispense with English gold.*

*The Testament of Peter the Great, Article 9*<sup>77</sup>

#### 5.1 Introduction

In some ways, defining 'the international' appears less of a problem looking at 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe when compared to the Balkans. After all, a distinguishable international system, made up of clearly defined, mostly neo-Absolutist states had emerged from the rubble of the Napoleonic disruption. In this way, 'the international' could simply mean the Vienna Concert of powers, not least since it was this Concert that exercised the most tangible influence in the Greek Question. Regardless of this undeniable fact, limiting the analysis to Great Power politics still appears somewhat problematic and would be liable to the charge of state-centrism. For example, the deteriorating conditions of the peasantry in the Morea, which is central for understanding the Greek Independence struggle, can be understood in terms of a conflict of situated local social forces. However, these are influenced by a manifold of 'external' dimensions, starting from the centralizing Ottoman state, the Vienna system and, not least, global geopolitical and economic developments. The same applies to the Porte's own drive towards centralization which was fuelled by the immediate and pressing need to raise income and efficiency of taxation as well as military flexibility in response to the increased geopolitical pressures during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thus, instead of a strictly binary inside/outside distinction, geopolitical relations appear to be structured rather like a Matryoshka doll, or an onion, with multiple layers of social interaction, none of them reducible to the 'logic' of the layer above, yet at the same time incomprehensible without looking at the onion as a whole. One of these layers we have already dealt with was the idea of an ideological penetration through an influential liberal Enlightenment which had prepared the intellectual ground for the Philiki Etaria. However, this impact was much more marginal than conventionally assumed. Equally, the economic

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<sup>77</sup> For a full version see Lehovich (1948).

transformations have had an only marginal impact, with a capitalist transformation not taking place until many years after the secession.

What remains, therefore, from an International Relations perspective, as the unique form of ‘external determination’, is the top layer of the onion – the Great Powers and a classical study of 19<sup>th</sup> century International History which will be presented in this chapter. This is of great importance, for, as the eminent Balkan historians Jelavich and Jelavich have duly pointed out, “...outside intervention [which] was to be more influential in determining the final outcome than were the actions of the Greek leaders themselves” (Jelavich and Jelavich 1977: 38).

This ‘Great Power’ dimension underwent a significant transformation in the long 19<sup>th</sup> century, which, according to Paul Schroeder, diminished the ‘logic’ of intra-European colonial/territorial competition and increased the cooperative, normative elements of this order (Schroeder, P. W. 1994). The Vienna Settlement ended the Napoleonic conquest of most of Europe which itself was premeditated by the French Revolution. It was, however, of wide-ranging consequence as it widely spread a political ideology and institutions which were adverse to the absolutist dynastic rule that had preceded it. After the Napoleonic forces were famously beaten at Waterloo by a coalition of Britain, Prussia and Russia in 1815, the peace conference at Vienna which restored the old inter-dynastic order gained fame as one of the most successful periods of international governance, inducing a 100 Years Peace to be broken only by the ‘Galloping Gertie’ leading to the First World War (Schroeder 1972).

This institutionalist interpretation of the Vienna era was also influential in the historiography of the Eastern Question. The post-Napoleonic inter-state system is frequently employed by IR theorists and international historians alike as the prime example for an international ‘order’ deserving of its name, successfully disciplining all of its members and creating a consensual international order – including the establishment of the Greek state (Schroeder 1983; Schroeder, P. W. 1994: 614-621, 637 – 642).

However, there is no historiographic consensus about this interpretation of the international dimension of the Greek Question. Rather, there exist two fundamentally opposing ways in which the geopolitical dimension of this conflict and its outcomes can be understood. These two strands reflect the discipline-defining inter-paradigm debate (Powell 1994). While Schroeder’s and others (eg Meadwell 2001) interpret the concert as a consensual, conscious creation of an internationally agreed normative institutional order, a realist view interprets Vienna as a period of remarkable, but only

relative stability, which was not consciously or normatively created but fundamentally based on the conditions of anarchy, self-help and – crucially – the balance of power mechanism. Realists argue for the immutability of Great Power struggles and the structural constraints of an anarchical international system. However, they equally emphasize the continuity of Russian expansionism which was only mediated, rather than eradicated by the Vienna order.

This chapter will in principle concur with the realist argument and submit that the geopolitical environment of the Greek Question was characterized first and foremost by the pursuit of geostrategic interests of the Romanov Empire and the British balancing policy trying to curtail these ambitions. Prior to Vienna, Catherine the Great's expansionist agenda is historiographically undisputed as she intended to seize the opportunity of Britain's preoccupation with the American War of Independence to enlarge her grip on Eastern Europe.<sup>78</sup> In this spirit, "the project of driving the Turks out of the Balkans was the kind of affair that appealed to Catherine's vanity" (Ragsdale 2006: 512). However, whilst the institutionalist historiography identifies a break with this tradition in 1815, it will be argued here that a continuity of Russian imperialist foreign ambitions can be discerned, at least as far as the Near East is concerned. Contrary to the realist conclusion about the structurally aggressive nature of Russia, it will be argued that her outward drive was not caused by a timeless 'logic' of anarchical inter-state relations, but was owed to the specificity of Russia's own geopolitical predicament forcing new forms of social reproduction focussed around the Black Sea. Due to the topography of the region and the lack of warm water ports, this 'forced' the Russian hand towards the Ottoman Empire and, more precisely, onto the Straits and Constantinople. The new geopolitical order in the Balkans was, however, not entirely conducive to Russia's own interest, but the outcome of the systemic compromises between the Great Powers.

This argument will be substantiated in three steps. First the debate on the Greek Question within International Relations will be revisited. The struggle over the international response to this crisis was reflected in a debate between institutionalist (Schroeder 1983) and realist (Cowles 1990; Kagan 1997; Rendall 2000, 2006) interpretations of the Vienna era. This debate will be summarized and reflected in light of a more detailed historical reconstruction of the Great Powers' response to the Greek dilemma. This will reveal, secondly, a major deviation of one traditional lynchpin of British foreign policy, the Pax Ottomanica. British support for the Greek

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<sup>78</sup> See appendix map no. 3

struggle was motivated mainly by the necessity to contain the expanding Russian influence in the entire region, whereas Russia, conversely, curtailed her territorial ambitions in favour of a balance of power regime in the region. Thirdly, it will be shown that these ambitions, epitomized by the Russian occupation of the Black Sea shores in 1774, mainly consisted of designs on the Straits for both defensive and commercial naval purposes. Thus, while there was some degree of moderation of Russian ambitions from 1815 onwards, this was owed to a Russian balance of power rationale, rather than a normative consensus reached at Vienna. This finding, finally, supports the realist over the institutionalist interpretation of the international response to the Greek question. Thus, the London Protocol which institutionalized Greek independence was not based on a normative consensus about the 'inter-national' nature of the new order, but represented the least common denominator of competing Great Powers. Interestingly, these Great Power influences were directly reflected in the infant Greek political landscape with the Russian, English and French parties constituting the cornerstones of the first multi-party system of the Greek polity.

## **5.2 The Vienna Concert – the Genesis of 'Modern' IR?**

As mentioned above, on February 3 1830 "the London Conference issued the protocol which established an independent Greek state under the guarantee of the three powers" with a European monarch as the head of state "as a concession to the conservative temper of the Concert of Europe" (Petropulos 1968: 48-50). Hence, European support for Greek Independence as not motivated by Enlightened Nationalist ideology or European Philhellenism. While in principle sympathetic to the Greeks, supporting revolt and upheaval clashed with the reactionary spirit of the time. This also raises the question as to whether this compromise came about due to the shared 'rational' and conscious creation of a new form of international order, or simply because it was the lowest common denominator; a negative balance of power compromise within an anarchical international system that was preventing a wide ranging solution to the issue. It was the international response to the Greek Question in particular which served as an arena for this historical reformulation of the inter-paradigm debate.

Paul W. Schroeder is one of the most prominent, if by no means uncontested institutionalist historians of the Concert period. He holds this era to be of a

historically unprecedented quality in establishing peaceful and cooperative relations between the Great Powers. To him, the common description of the Vienna accords as 'restoration' constitutes a historical distortion, for "only a few regimes, and none of the great powers, really wanted or tried to do this" (Schroeder, P. W. 1994: 586). Schroeder understands this period as an economic and mostly domestically driven period of 'recuperation' instead, characterized by economic crises and political upheaval, none of which would allow for restoring an international order beyond a domestic consolidation of power in Neo-Absolutist regimes. It is this need for domestic recovery which dictated peaceful international relations to most dynasts. The late 18<sup>th</sup> century had been, in contrast, characterized mainly by the escalation of Great Power conflicts – owed to the escalating logic of mutually aggravating balance of power policies (Schroeder, P. W. 1994: 586f). In other words, the shared belief in "Balance-of-Power rules and practices were not a solution to war in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (if they ever have been) but a major part of the problem" (Schroeder, P. W. 1994: 6). To Schroeder, therefore, "the European equilibrium established in 1815 and lasting well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century differed sharply from so-called balances in the 18<sup>th</sup>" (Schroeder 1986: 2) since it represented a new and progressive kind of international system, rather than a return to the kind of habits captured by Realism.

To Schroeder, this systemic change was not the conscious rational choice of individual statesmen of the likes of Metternich to restore a pre-Revolutionary and pre-Napoleonic status quo ante based on shared norms of dynasticism as reflected in the concept of 'restoration' (Kissinger 2000). Rather, the creation of a novel order based on the common adherence to international norms and rules was the result of 'systemic' constraints and necessities. Schroeder utilizes the historic example of the Russian 'constraint' in the Greek Question, as the *prima facie* evidence for the transformative capacity of the system (Schroeder 1983: 612). For example, it was interpreted as a sign of taming Russian territorial ambitions that the Tsar refused to take part in the Greek War of Independence. This reluctance to help the Orthodox brothers was based, according to Hudson Meadwell, on a common fear of revolution amongst European Princes which produced a system, or a structure, of "Monarchical Solidarity". Hence the spectre of social revolution had, in fact, a pacifying effect on the international system. Inter-dynastic relations followed the common goal to preserve the status quo, and with it, evidently, the dynast's social power (Meadwell 2001: 172f). Even when Nicholas decisively won another war against the Ottomans, this time triggered by the unwise closure of the Straits to Russian shipping, in

September 1829, he was said to have exercised remarked restraint - even though he would have had a strong motive, the military capacity as well as a golden opportunity to dispose of Russia's naval constraints by gaining full control over the Straits at this occasion (Kerner 1938). To Schroeder, Russian foreign policy after 1815 is therefore best described as "conservative, legalistic, antirevolutionary, and oriented toward peace and great-power cooperation" whereas with regards to the Eastern Question, Russia "more than once came to Turkey's aid to save it from other enemies" (Schroeder 1983: 4).

There remains a question, however, as to what degree the Concert was functional as an international regime given the explicit exclusion, up until 1856, of one of the major 'units' of the system, the Porte, from the newly instituted and celebrated international order. Matthew Rendall, in response to Schroeder, agrees on the perceived lack of decisive Russian action when the historical juncture and capabilities all seemed to favour Russia's long-term objectives. Whilst Schroeder explains this with reference to the new Vienna system and its structural tendency for containment, Rendall explains it by referring to Tsar Alexander's exceptionally peaceful character – a point well illustrated by his successor Nicholas's more assertive foreign policy (Rendall 2000: 54). This *temporary* shift from Peter's and Catherine's outright expansionism and the moderation seen after the Napoleonic invasion is, according to Rendall, not the result of the coercive capacities of the international system at the time, however. He explicitly points out that Alexander did not fear Western intervention should he act in favour of the Greek revolt (Rendall 2000: 63). Indeed, whilst he did show sensitivity for the wider European states system, he ultimately insisted that the Greek struggle was a "purely Russian Affair" in principle (Rendall 2000: 71). In the absence of a systemic obstacle to a full-scale war and given the traditionally hostile nature of Russo-Turkish relations, the question as to why Alexander I did not intervene more decisively still has to be answered by the realists. Rendall answers this with reference to Russia being territorially saturated and Alexander's personal conservatism which naturally pitched him against any revolt – including the ones directed against his arguably greatest adversary. This reaction, or rather lack thereof, he claims, is, therefore still best understood through a realist lens, yet one of a 'defensive' kind, which he deploys in opposition to John Mearsheimer's 'offensive' variety of Realism (Mearsheimer 2001: Chapter 10; Rendall 2006). Rendall aims at accommodating what he sees as an exception from the rule of a continuously expansionist Russian Foreign policy within his overall realist



narrative. Thus, it was not so much the underlying anarchical conditions that changed, but much more the personality of Alexander I, who was the ‘tamed’ exception proving the aggressive Russian rule. After this brief elaboration of both opposing approaches, I will now turn to a more detailed historical discussion which should clarify how to best understand the international response to the Greek Question.

### **5.3 The Ottoman Empire and Russia at Vienna**

Institutionalist cheerleaders for Vienna usually rely heavily on the fact that the Great Powers reacted in a by and large uniform way to the Greek struggle – which was less than sympathetic, remaining largely true to its conservative spirit. Even generally liberal and pro-Hellenic Western European statesmen at the time complained about the Greek revolt as a major disturbance of the newly established order. Amongst others, “an exacerbated British prime minister, the Duke of Wellington, was prompted to complain that ‘there never was such a humbug as the Greek affair altogether’” (Clogg 1979: 56). From the outset “the rulers of Europe responded to the news of the Greek Revolution with marked disfavour”. Even the Tsar, like Britain, France, Prussia and Austria “tried to ignore the Greeks and hoped that the Sultan could snuff out the revolt” (Petropulos 1968: 43). To put it mildly, the international environment at the time did not seem to favour the Greek cause and the unity on the matter seemed to confirm the operability of the Metternichean system. The conservative and reactionary forces of post-Napoleonic Europe were opposed to revolution in general, even though, coincidentally, it was precisely the most conservative of forces, i.e. the Austrian and Russian spearheads of the reaction that could have gained most from weakening the Sultan and (especially in the Russian case) from Greek autonomy, possibly under Russian protection using the blueprint of the 1826 Akkerman Convention establishing a semi-independent Serbia. Yet, Russia, even in the light of the brutal assassination of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople on Easter Monday 1821, did not move beyond the emission of a brief note of protest, despite growing internal pressure to intervene. Austria, on the other hand, had previously taken an active part in suppressing the revolt by extraditing one of the eminent intellectuals of the Greek Enlightenment, Rigas Velestinlis, to the Porte in 1798. He was duly executed on transfer to Istanbul in Belgrade on June 24 of the same year. According to the institutionalist reading of this period, the reluctance to get involved in the Greek affair was not only owed to the prevailing reactionary

and anti-revolutionary spirit, but was also due to the ‘consensus’ about Ottoman territorial preservation as the best possible geopolitical order of the region.

A realist counter to this institutionalist reading would argue that the maintenance of Ottoman territorial integrity as a solution to the eastern question was much more a British than French, Russian or Austrian preference. Even before the formal establishment of the Vienna system, which generally appeared to operate in the Sultan’s favour, Britain aimed at institutionalizing this policy of Ottoman preservation wherever possible. Making the Empire the southeastern European pillar for its hegemonic balance of power policy in this geopolitically highly sensitive and yet volatile region had the advantage of excluding any other of the Great Powers (especially Russia) while the Porte was weak enough to be gullible, yet also strong enough to avert a full Russian invasion. This was almost a logical extension of British Blue Water policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. Ottoman territorial integrity was, thus, not primarily an imperative derived from a post-Napoleonic conservative status quo ante thinking, but is better understood as the southeastern corner stone of a wider European and Middle Eastern geopolitical grand design of the British Empire. This, in turn, was determined by the need to maintain the trade routes through the Levant towards India. Nevertheless, due to a rise in classical humanistic education and in direct contravention to this kind of *Realpolitik* thinking, the British public and administration were privately very sympathetic to the Greek cause<sup>79</sup> but suspected – on good grounds – that an autonomous Greece would, after Serbia, become yet another Russian foothold in the region. As to whether this was a product of a Russophobic British foreign policy tradition<sup>80</sup> or whether this was indeed the reflection of a real existing requirement to maintain the balance of power in the region will be dealt with in the following section.

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<sup>79</sup> This attitude was channelled into a movement called the ‘Philhellenes’ which flourished across Europe with Charles X of France and Ludwig I of Bavaria being the most prominent, if by no means sole supporters amongst the European dynasts. Notably, the Russian Tsars were less enthusiastic about it, as any such ambition was likely to be seen as an attempt to install an Orthodox satellite regime under the ‘Greek’ label.

<sup>80</sup> While ‘Russophobia’ is distinct from ‘Slavophobia’, these two are often used interchangeably. British foreign policy developed a tradition of eying Russia suspiciously, especially with regard to Russian ambitions in the Middle East, which were thought to affect Britain’s most vital interest, India. See Gleason (1951: 58); see chapter 6.

#### **5.4 The International Making of Modern Greece**

Whether by British Grand Design or genuine consensus, this anti-independence and pro-Ottoman policy started to be compromised when Lord Canning followed Castlereagh as Prime Minister. Castlereagh was allegedly more willing to listen to the philhellenic British public. Amongst those in favour of Greek independence were influential figures from the City of London to whom many Greek merchants had excellent relations. As a result, the entire Greek struggle was effectively sustained through British finance alone. The need to recover those loans naturally increased the desirability of a Greek success.<sup>81</sup> More importantly, however, as the war wore on, a heightened Russian involvement became more likely as more atrocities and massacres were committed against the Orthodox subjects. British fears were further fuelled by the death of the troubled, yet calm, Alexander I, who was already hard pressed to contain his hawkish administration. An escalation seemed to be on the cards when Alexander died of an alleged suicide and his more proactive and more conservative brother Nicholas I took power in 1826 (Jelavich and Jelavich 1977). Faced with a potentially much more assertive Russia, growing public concern and a large debt owed by the revolutionaries, Britain as well as Austria could not afford to stand by idly. The potential Russian exploitation of the Greek situation generated a geopolitical imperative in the Balkans as the Greek struggle provided Russia with plenty of leverage for taking a militarily more assertive position. When war did break out in 1828 between Russia and the Porte, this was, admittedly, triggered by the Ottoman's closure of the Straits to Russia's mercantile fleet rather than Russian hostility. However, it left little space for manoeuvre to Lord Canning's administration. Contrary to popular perception, his rationale for intervention was less grounded in the Philhellenism so popular with large parts of the European but also the American public (cf. Saint-Claire 1972: 59-60), than in a geopolitical quagmire (Konstantinou 1998). "[Canning] simply feared that Russia might take unilateral action against the Ottoman Empire"... whilst at the same time Russia saw herself similarly under pressure to compete with British influence: "Russia could not afford to let England, already its great rival in the Near East, win the popularity and hence the influence which it had traditionally exercised among the Greeks" (Petropoulos 1968: 45). Inter-state competition, in a proto-realist manner, had generated a swift

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<sup>81</sup> As the City had funded the Greek operations since 1824, the need to pay the loan back was a decisive impediment to post-independence development and land distribution.

policy change from reactionary status quo policies to a heightened competition for Greek favour.

Finding the lowest common denominator between Russia and Britain (and to a lesser degree France and Austria) was not, however, necessarily as confrontational as might have been expected. Once the struggle had gained a dynamic, the Great Power's preoccupation was not so much to favour either of the two conflicting sides in the Greek War of Independence, but simply to stabilize the region so important to both of them – the Straits for Russia and the routes to India for Britain. This objective had always been best achieved by preserving Ottoman territorial integrity. Now, however, "Greco-Turkish naval hostilities disrupted trade in the eastern Mediterranean and thereby affected the British, French, Austrians and Russians" (Petropulos 1968: 44) alike. More specifically, "Russian Black Sea grain trade and British and French commercial interests in the Levant had suffered considerably on account of the hostilities" (Clogg 1979: 62) and the prevailing common desire was to re-instate stability in the region in general. In light of these developments, Greek Independence, whilst not initially being a part of British grand territorial design, was, once the dynamic of secession appeared inevitable, the only viable route to avoid another Russian foothold in the region. This choice was made in light of Walachia and Moldavia and later Serbia having already become de-facto Russian protectorates by decree of the 1926 Akkerman convention. This time, however, Greek neutrality, full independence and joint protection by four powers were to guarantee a cordial solution less dependent on Russia alone. "For Wellington, fearing after the Treaty of Adrianople<sup>82</sup> that a tributary Greek state might, like the Danubian Principalities, fall increasingly under Russian influence, was inclined to favour the idea of a fully sovereign Greece" (Clogg 1979: 66). 'Independence' in this case, thus meant independence from Ottoman rule as well as from the exclusive control of any single one of the Great Powers. However, it did not mean independence from the joint control of Russia, France and Britain (Petropulos 1968: 48). Conversely, the thus far mainly British preoccupation with sustaining the Sultan's reign in the Balkans and the Middle East was increasingly shared by the Tsar. Hence, despite the active great power competition, there appears to be an equal amount of evidence to support the

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<sup>82</sup> Ending the Russo-Turkish War which brought the Ottoman Empire close to a complete subjugation to Russian forces, the 1829 Treaty of Adrianople conceded yet more Ottoman territories, especially in the Caucasus and Bessarabia to the Tsar.

institutionalist thesis given the high level of international, or rather intra-European, coordination in the Greek Question.

Nicholas's agreement to the "Ottoman model" for a geopolitical order in the region was derived from the realization that Britain would not allow Russia to establish an (even) tighter control over the Middle East. Initially the cooperation with Russia in the Greek Question was therefore carefully coordinated by Lord Canning in strict avoidance of the other continental powers. Thus, it was more of a bilateral, rather than a truly multilateral form of cooperation. The two parties who had carried the heaviest economical burden due to the instability in the region, Russia and Britain, agreed in principle that cooperation was inevitable. This also followed a defensive rationale, however. For, the matter of the Straits was equally one of national defence for the Tsar. He feared that would the control over the Straits pass to a different, more formidable or chaotic regime, a military and/or commercial penetration of the Black Sea by European Powers was likely. The agreement established in 1774 in Küçük Kaynarca increasingly appeared as the more favourable solution over the full liberalisation of traffic through the Straits (Anderson 1970).

### **5.5 Küçük Kaynarca and the Greek Question**

Conventionally, however, the Küçük Kaynarca regime is not interpreted as possessing any defensive character whatsoever. The treaty had ended one of many Russo-Turkish encounters in 1774, which, together with the 'Testament of Peter the Great',<sup>83</sup> is usually presented as the prime example for the continuing aggression and transhistorically expansionist rationale of Russian foreign policy. John H. Gleason (Gleason 1951) points out how British foreign policy, rather than pioneering Realpolitik, was highly prejudiced in establishing the tradition of Russophobia. Whether this argument holds true as an explanation of British behaviour in the Greek Question will be seen in the following section. In any case, the 'Russophobes' certainly had it right when ascertaining a strong Russian interest in the Ottoman Empire, which usually led to encounters of a hostile nature.<sup>84</sup> On the one hand, Küçük

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<sup>83</sup> The so-called 'Testament of Peter the Great' sets out the steps for future Russian expansions. It is generally considered a forgery, but was utilized up until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to justify anti-Russian and anti-Soviet foreign policies; see Resis (1985: 681). Resis compares the social function of the testament to the infamous 'Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion' to the Nazis and sees it as generally discredited, whereas "some of our most respected officials, scholars, and journalists [still] give credence to the "Testament", (Subtelny 1974).

<sup>84</sup> For a chronology of Russo-Ottoman engagements, please refer to the appendix.

Kaynarca intensified a process set in motion by the treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718), i.e. the closure, consolidation and regression of the thus far open borders of the Ottoman Empire as they sanctioned the loss of territories of an (at that time)\_expansionist empire (Abou-el-Haj 1969; Abou-El-Haj 2005: 62).<sup>85</sup> More than the mere reality of the loss, however, it was the precise geopolitical location of the territories in question which determined the future destiny of the Ottoman Empire. The loss of the Black Sea shores and most importantly, the Crimea with its mostly Muslim Crimean Tatar population was not only humiliating, but also implied the peacetime right of passage through the Straits for commercial shipping to Russia, providing, thereby, year-round access to the important Mediterranean markets for Russian produce. Together with the end of Ottoman suzerainty over the Crimea and the subsequent Russian occupation thereof, this turned the Black Sea from an Ottoman into a Russian lake, which would, as a consequence, naturally seek to control the one and only naval outlet – the Ottoman capital. This was, however, not necessarily a matter of endogenously and socially generated Russian aggression, but much more a matter of geopolitical necessity as the Straits provided the unique opening to gain warm water access for Russian produce, especially grain.

Beyond establishing the geopolitical prerequisites for an endless Russo-Ottoman conflict, Küçük Kaynarca also laid the foundations which allowed for the rise of Balkan nationalism under Russian supervision in the Ottoman provinces. Sidelining the clerical authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate over the Porte's Orthodox subjects, Küçük Kaynarca established Catherine the Great's protective status over the Ottoman Christian subjects. To be precise, the treaty itself did not entail the legitimation of Russian influence in Ottoman affairs. Rather, it allowed the Tsar to protect only those Orthodox subjects living in the Principalities and the Caucasus. These provisions were not only generously interpreted but even flagrantly violated by widening the claim so as to include all Orthodox subjects. Given that the protection of the Sultan was sufficient and effectively regulated through the Rum Millet, this treaty violation arguably favoured the Tsarina much more than the Ottoman Orthodox community. The Sultan countered by making, for the first time, explicit use of the institution of the Caliphate, which allowed him to claim spiritual leadership over all Muslims, including the ones in Russia and specifically in the

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<sup>85</sup> The most hurtful loss to the Porte at Küçük Kaynarca was the primarily Muslim inhabited Crimea.

Crimea. This is remarkable insofar as the Ottoman Sultans had already formally inherited the title of 'Caliph' from the Mamluks when Selim I occupied Mecca and Medina in the 1520s. It was, however, not until 1774 and again during the late Ottoman Islamicist restoration of the Sultanate under Abdülhamid II in the 1870s that this title was instrumentalized as a tool of foreign policy, before finally being abolished by Kemal Atatürk in 1924. This escalation indicates the Sultan's desperation over the Russian encroachment on Ottoman sovereignty that Küçük Kaynarca constituted. In fact, given the disastrous consequences, his fears were by no means inflated.

It was, thus, partly in reaction to the Sultan deploying the relatively powerful ideological 'tool' of the Caliphate, partly out of dissatisfaction with the nevertheless quite substantial territorial gains of Küçük Kaynarca, but above all out of a desire to place the Straits under tight Russian control, possibly through a vassal, that Catherine the Great developed her 'Greek Project'. This plan, second only to Peter the Great's 'Testament' in its historiographic perception as evidence for Russian imperial aggression (Ragsdale 1993: 75, 82)<sup>86</sup>, anticipated the Megali Idea by projecting the deposition of the Sultan and the revival of Byzantine/Orthodox rule at Constantinople under Russian suzerainty (Ragsdale 1988: 93). However, this was not just a loose and imaginative idea, but was pursued quite thoroughly at least during Catherine's rule. According to Hugh Ragsdale she started out by Hellenizing parts of the Russian court as well as her own children's and grandchildren's education. Dreaming of establishing a Romanov Byzantine dynasty on the shores of the Bosphorus, she had her grandson baptized 'Constantine' so he would take the still imaginary throne at Constantinople. Catherine also secured the support of the Austrian Emperor, Joseph II, with whom she intended to share the spoils of Ottoman dismemberment.

The Greek Project was the personal brainchild of Catherine. It was not pursued in the same fashion beyond her rule, nor did it establish a 'tradition' in Russian foreign policy, partly due to a strong Austrian opposition developing against it. It is nevertheless highly significant, as it reflected the more tangible practice of a strong Russian interest in the Straits. Thus, despite being overambitious, Catherine's Greek Project does hold significance for the Greek Question for it established the geopolitical environment so crucial for understanding the social conflict that ultimately led to Greek independence. All of this might have been less momentous

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<sup>86</sup> Ragsdale concludes that the Greek Project constitutes the only solid evidence for Russian expansionism while he relegates the *Testament* to the realm of historical mythology.

had the expanding Russian Empire enjoyed better access for its grain through warm water ports. However, the lack thereof almost forced Russia's growing volumes of trade through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles - like through the eye of a needle and making the control of the Straits a natural goal of Russian foreign policy – whether through aggressive or cooperative tactics (Jelavich 1973). Secondly, Küçük Kaynarca also led to a Hellenization within Russia as the Romanovs started recruiting Grecophone nobles for the Russian administration and military whilst the opening of the Russian Black Sea trade through the Straits led to the Russian encouragement of Orthodox Christian merchants from within the Ottoman Empire to settle on the Black Sea shores. This led to the establishment of large Greek merchant communities in Odessa and Sevastopol. Both of these developments, combined with the relative lack of success of both the Greek Project or the grain trade, are highly significant for explaining the origins of the Greek national project, as the eventual leaders of the Filiki Etaria and the Greek Revolt had their social origins in just these heterochthon groups.

#### *Russian Moderation under Alexander I and Nicholas I*

Pointing out Catherine the Great's imperialist ambitions does not necessarily have to contradict Schroeder's argument, however. He evidently focuses on Russian containment only through the Concert system, i.e. after 1815, so pre-Vienna Russian imperialism ends up confirming, rather than contradicting his point. This shift from Catherine's outright expansionism to Alexander I and Nicholas I's is understood as the result of a commitment to the post-Napoleonic status quo order. Their pledge was not with imperial aggrandizement, but with 'Enlightened Absolutism'. The new Realpolitik implied in this shift severely constrained the former Tsarina's ambitious plans (Jelavich 1991: 32-33). "Virtually all scholars agree that Russia's foreign policies (...) especially in the Near East, were ones of considerable moderation..." (Hass 2005: 77). In particular, most of Russian historiography establishes Alexander's pacific attitude, and portrays him as a much loved liberal reformer. "[N]othing could have been more contrary [to his mood] than this outbreak of a revolution in the Balkans" (Lobanov-Rostovsky 1968: 427; Palmer 1974). Despite being 'liberal' at heart, Alexander was not only committed to the Vienna status quo – a policy that was arguably motivated by a deep understanding of great power balancing. He was also averse to the revolutionary social change the Greek revolt appeared to represent, as any official recognition of the 'national' principle would



have severe consequences for other elements of the Russian imperial policy at the time, most notably the Ottoman's most reliable European ally, Poland. Thus, Alexander is alleged to have wasted no time in reassuring the Sultan of his lack of involvement in the Greek affair (Lobanov-Rostovsky 1968: 408). The increased violence of the conflict and especially the assassination of the Patriarch of Constantinople, nevertheless posed a dilemma between adhering to conservative principles and rushing to the aid of Orthodox Christians still formally under Alexander's personal protection. The Russian establishment, already not necessarily impressed with his moderate foreign policy, expected Alexander to take a more proactive stance in favour of the Greek struggle, since he was expected to be leading the entire Orthodox world. What remained, therefore, despite Alexander's general moderation, was the subtle threat of Russian involvement.

#### **5.6 The Straits Question: The Structural determination of Russian Foreign Agency**

However, more than the issue of Orthodoxy, this threat was constituted by the geopolitics of the region. Even though the general consensus on Alexander's Greek policy appears to be that he shunned the uprising, that he wanted to preserve the Empire and that he did not want to be seen as acting outside of the Concert, he had nevertheless set the diplomatic foundations for a later intervention when he successfully lobbied the other Great Powers to refute Metternich's proposal to include the Sultan in the new international order on the basis of the illegitimacy of the Porte's rule over its European provinces (Seignobos 1917: 9). According to Alexander's rationale, undermining the Porte's scope of action internationally would make the eastern question naturally an internal Russian affair, effectively proclaiming a Russian prerogative to intervene in Ottoman affairs whenever deemed necessary on behalf of its Christian subjects.

More importantly, however, as the Greek struggle, which was to a large extent carried out by sea, started to have a painful effect on Russia's grain trade through the Straits, this dilemma became much less difficult to solve. Even though Alexander explicitly told the Revolutionaries Ypsilanti and Capodistrias (both members of his administration), that he "did not intend to leave a free field to the enemies of order" and that "at all costs means must be found of avoiding war with Turkey" (Anderson 1966: 61), he and his successor Nicholas I still preferred to keep

all of their options open by not preventing the Greek operation which was planned by men in Russian service and launched from Russian controlled territories. After all, Ypsilantis “was not an obscure agitator, he was a Russian General, a friend of the Stourdzas and a prominent figure in Viennese Society during the Congress” (Palmer 1974: 377). Regardless of Alexander’s personal political convictions or hesitations, the social order based on an Ancient Regime within Russia made the shift from Catherine’s outright expansionism to Alexander’s and Nicolas’s ‘commitment’ to the Vienna status quo more of a superficial and temporary, than a revolutionary and long lasting one. Despite the supposed “sea change” in the post-Napoleonic international system, their inherent support and obvious exploitation of the situation ultimately reflected a high degree of continuity in the Russian war aims, the most persistent feature of which was the desire to encompass “control over the Straits, national statehood for the Balkan Christian peoples, and ascendant political influence throughout the region” (Bodger 1984: 43) well into Stalin’s reign. The threat of a Greek state under Russian suzerainty was shared by most Great Powers, so open support might have been prevented especially by active preventative measures by Austria and Britain, rather than a universally accepted normative structure. It was merely a coincidence, however, that Alexander resided with Metternich and Emperor Francis at Laibach when the news of the revolt reached him, effectively preventing any meaningful action in its favour.

#### *The Imperialist Logic of Ottoman Preservation*

Russia’s reluctance to support the Greek cause outright in a more assertive show of hegemonic ambition, is not so much owed to either her lack of such an ambition or a normative constraint of the Vienna system, but by the acknowledgement of an international structure that is best described as a realist balance of power. The successor of Capodistrias in the office of the Russian foreign minister understood these constraints very well, most evidently laid out in a memorandum on the 1929 Peace of Adrianople. For Russia, he argued

“...any order of things which might be substituted there [in the Ottoman Empire] would not balance for us the advantage of having for a neighbour a weak state, always menaced by the spirit of revolt which agitates its vassals, reduced by a successful war to submit to the law of the conqueror”.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Memorandum of Nicholas’ Foreign Minister Count Nesselrode at the occasion of a Meeting of the Special committee on the Affairs of Turkey on September 16, 1829 in St Petersburg, quoted in Kerner (1938: 281).

Here, Russian foreign policy appears to have undergone a major shift from grand Byzantine designs to territorial saturation, even lending support to the Sultan. Indeed, Russo-Turkish relations experienced a form of *détente* after the signing of the Akkerman Convention on 6 October 1826 which comprised concessions regarding Russian influence in the Principalities and Serbia and seemingly satisfied all interests involved. When war broke out in 1828, this was still mainly due to Mehmed's insistence on closing the Straits after the Battle of Navarino, which left Russia little choice but to re-open her maritime umbilical cord by force. Even though the Russian victory over the Ottoman forces at Adrianople (Edirne) in 1829 was unambiguous and brought Russian artillery within the range of the Topkapi Palace, Nicholas deliberately stopped the advance of his far superior troops, pursuing what Schroeder called an 'inactive hegemony' (Schroeder, P. 1994: 663). While Britain was uneasy about the impressive display of Russian military superiority and her territorial gains, this still did not generate pro-active, anti-Russian and pro-Ottoman involvement.

What changed this attitude was not Russia itself, however, but, paradoxically, Mohammad Ali's forceful and almost successful challenge to the Sultan. Disgruntled over the lack of spoils from the war against the Greeks and fully aware of the Egyptian military superiority, Ali set out on a campaign against his overlord that brought him, or rather his son Ibrahim, within sight of the Bosphorus twice. During the Battle of Konya on December 21 1832, Ibrahim virtually destroyed the main Ottoman army after a long and successful campaign through Syria. Complacent about the balance of power in the region with Russia apparently appeased and saturated, the Ottoman plea for help fell on deaf ears in London and Paris. Not so in St Petersburg, however. In what appeared to be a major reshuffling of alliances, Russia rushed to preserve the Sultan's rule over the Straits against his rebellious vassal. The Russian navy moored almost its entire Black Sea fleet in the Bosphorus in February 1833 in exchange for full Russian navigation rights through the Straits. This also obliged the Porte to deny access to any potential enemy of the Tsar, effectively forming a very exceptional bilateral defensive alliance which was signed on July 8 1833 in the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi. This treaty, proverbially speaking, put the fox in charge of the henhouse, by turning the Ottoman Empire, in Lord Palmerston's words, effectively into a Russian protectorate (Adanir 2005: 406).

As opposed to bringing the Ottoman Empire into the Russian imperialist orbit, this potentially life-threatening situation turned out to widen the Porte's scope of action far beyond the expulsion of the Egypto-Albanian challenge. The Tsar's unexpected and cunning support sent shockwaves through the European capitals. Russian domination of the Ottoman Empire, if not by direct military occupation, but through quasi-hegemonic indirect control, was nothing short of a nightmare scenario for France, but more-so for Britain. Prior to Hünkâr İskelesi, Palmerstone had all but given up on the Sultan's ability to provide the sort of order Britain had in mind when supporting the Pax Ottomana. In other words, the continuous military defeats and internal challenges to the Porte's rule prior to the exceptional Ottoman-Russian rapprochement meant that Britain had started considering alternative solutions to the eastern question. Not even the Egyptian challenge to the Sultan's sovereignty, which jeopardized Britain's vital India trading routes more than the Greek War of Independence, changed this laissez-fair approach. This, however, changed rapidly once it became clear that the alternative to idleness would be Russian vigour. It was, therefore, the spectre of Russian hegemony in southeastern Europe as well as the Middle East that revived the pre-eminent policy of Ottoman preservation. Even though Muhammad Ali's campaign had comprehensively crippled the Porte militarily, financially as well as psychologically, the Tsar's ostensible opportunism had forced the British back to preserving Ottoman territorial integrity. In concrete terms, the British awakening to Russia's real ambitions had two effects. First, it caused a shift from supporting Greek 'suzerainty' (copying the Serb model of a tributary relation to the Sultan with Russian guarantees as was previously agreed between the Great Powers), to the full scale independence eventually granted in the London Protocol. Secondly, it made Britain more committed to the Porte, so that when Egyptian forces closed in on Istanbul for the second time in 1839, an Austro-British naval intervention restored Ottoman rule.

These events appear to contradict Schroeder's and other arguments about Russian territorial saturation when her ambitions, especially in the Near East, were in full swing, albeit with more sophistication than previously (Kerner 1938: 282-286). This can be explained by the continuous lack of access to warm water ports, which continued to compromise Russia's participation in the growing world economy. This is what premeditated Russia's actions regardless of the personalities in the leadership. This does not mean that outright occupation of the Straits and the Balkans was seen

as the only option, however. While Orthodox client states emerged in southeastern Europe, gaining control over the Straits could equally be achieved by manipulating a weak Sultan. Conspiracy theories describing Mohammed Ali as a Russian agent could probably win a wide audience. So in principle, Nicholas was ready to settle differences with the Porte peacefully if possible. However, Robert Kerner provides ample evidence that this was not owed to a Russian adherence to the norms of the Concert, but due to pure pragmatism. In case the opportunity rose, however, partition and distribution plans were readily available and shared, at times, with Austria and France.<sup>88</sup> The outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854,<sup>89</sup> under the same supposedly restrained Nicholas I finally put an end to the idea of a *détente* and confirmed the unaltered, but also unalterable Russian position based on free passage through the Straits. This argument is also not diminished by the Tsar's temporary acknowledgment of European balance of power realities. Russian geopolitical designs were almost immutable since they originated in a specific strategy of socio-economic reproduction dependent on profits from Black Sea trade and Ukrainian corn production. This could not be altered without incurring significant material, military and social costs on the Tsar. Thus, as much as Russophobic arguments suggest an innate Russian propensity towards aggression and war mongering, the Straits question, while social in origin, nevertheless constitutes a tight frame of action to almost any Russian leader.

As a consequence, the Straits remain a contentious issue in Russo-Turkish relations to this day. Access is regulated in the 1936 Montreux Convention, but generally the Straits are under exclusive Turkish control. This was evidenced in the recent conflict between Russia and Georgia. Russia protested over Turkey's admission of two large US Coast Guard vessels through the Straits (Anonymous 2008).<sup>90</sup> The terms of the Convention restrict the number and weight of non-Turkish War ships as well as limiting their stay in the Black Sea to 21 days. As a reaction to Russian protests and trade blockades, the Turkish navy blocked the entry to further

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<sup>88</sup> Prior to the realization of Greek internal instability, the British as well as Russian post-Ottoman designs had rested on a Greek 'revival' in the Eastern Mediterranean as a cornerstone. The ultra-conservative French Foreign Minister Jules de Polignac, on the other hand, proposed the outright territorial division of the Ottoman Empire between Russia and France at British expense before being deposed by the 1830 July Revolution (Stavrianos 2000 [1958]: 290).

<sup>89</sup> Arguably, Nicholas' grievance should have been with Napoleon III rather than the Porte. Instead, he punished the Sultan for his inability to negotiate the guardianship over the Holy Land after Napoleon had effectively forced Abdülmecid's hand at the expense of Russia.

<sup>90</sup> Anonymous (2008): Russia warns Turkey on U.S. ships in Black Sea, *Hurriyet English*. Istanbul; available at <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=9766567>, (accessed 28 August 2008)

US vessels on their way to Georgia that were considered to exceed the maximum number and/or size (Hallinan 2008; İdiz 2008),<sup>91</sup> thus upholding Russia's prerogatives towards their ally. Despite Stalin's post-war plea to revise the control of the straits, the Montreux regime always equally worked in Russia's and the Soviet Union's favour - preserving the Black Sea as a Russian lake.

## 5.7 Conclusion

In summary it can be argued that despite ample evidence for a post 1815 general détente and an increase in cooperation, the institutionalist account does not consider how the European interest in the Greek uprising was dependent on the potential emergence of Russian hegemony in the region. Cooperation was not based on a normative consensus but on the collective management of potential threats in a strictly realist fashion. Hence, it is owed to the spectre of the Russian dominance of the Balkans that Britain and France demanded a fully independent and powerful Greek state. Russia, on the other hand, being alerted by her own success, but also by Mohammed Ali's rise as a formidable internal challenger to the Sultan's authority, gradually abandoned Catherine the Great's overt schemes of domination and replaced them with more sophisticated strategies. However, this was not motivated by normative concerns but by plain pragmatism. More importantly, the underlying social conditions determining Russian expansionism had not changed.

Schroeder's tribute to the Vienna System as the most sophisticated international order in international history overlooks the degree to which Russia's continued territorial ambitions continued to constitute a formidable challenge to the Pax Britannica and how much of the eastern question was determined by just this Anglo-Russian geopolitical competition over influence in the Middle East. Emphasizing this conflict, which was also pursued in the Far East, provides for a better understanding of the international dynamic that led to the acceptance and endorsement of what was initially perceived as a disturbance, the Greek uprising. This makes a national secession, such as the Greek one, in the midst of a supposedly reactionary international order much more intelligible than the normative appeal of an all pervasive system of "mutual consensus on norms and rules, respect for law (...) rights, security, status, claims, duties, and satisfactions rather than power..." (Schroeder 1992: 694f).

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<sup>91</sup> For a historic discussion see: Hurewitz (1962), DeLuca (1981), Váli (1972: 34f)

In other words, what led to the success of the Greek revolt was a Great Power contestation fuelled by fears of Russian dominance, rather than a wilful support of a nationalist struggle. It was, thus, the menace of Russian expansionism and a proactive, mainly British, balance of power policy, rather than her cooperation as an equal member within an international regime guided by rules, norms and procedures, which first led to the compromising of the previously sacred principle of Ottoman territorial preservation, before reviving it again.

Russian designs continued to be derived from a historically pre-determined geostrategic reasoning based on gaining unimpeded access to the Mediterranean and beyond. That this was not of Alexander's or Nicholas's personal making but set in motion by their indirect predecessor, Catherine, at Küçük Kaynarca, does not change the fact that they found themselves in a position where the pursuit of similar goals, which in principle created a competitive situation between the Ottoman Empire, Austria and Britain, was the only option. This raises the question as to whether in fact a realist analysis is not best suited for explaining this crucial historical juncture, which ultimately determined the eastern question in large measure. Having reconsidered the role of Russian expansionism here, it could be easily argued that the geopolitical dynamic portrayed in this chapter and described by Realism dictates the international response to the Greek struggle much more than any potentially moderating normative or societal effects of the Vienna Concert.

However, contrary to such a strict realist or Weberian outside-in historicisation of these developments, the combined picture drawn in chapters 4 and 5 goes to show that this process is not abstracted from individual, localized social as well as dynastic agents and the social struggles they engage in. The outcomes of these struggles cannot be reduced to the passive enactment of geopolitical necessities. In other words, the transformation towards nation-formation cannot be captured by a deterministic, functionalist or positivist reference to the 'logics' of interstate competition alone. The local dynamics of secession are conversely equally not comprehensible without a theorization through the prism of this geopolitical momentum which was propelled by the unaltered expansionist drive of the Romanov Empire – itself a result of the historically specific juncture at Küçük Kaynarca and Russia's intensifying competition with British imperial ambitions. The international response to the Greek Question has to be understood as the unintended outcome of these dialectical social and geopolitical struggles between the Ottoman Empire, Russian and British balance of power policy within an emerging system of European

states. Struggles between situated agents have specific outcomes that cannot be reduced to an overarching modernist rationale imposing itself in an all-determining fashion, neither in 1683, nor in 1815.



## **6 The Incarnation of the Antichrist or Strategic Linchpin?**

### **Orientalism and the Ambiguous Ottoman-European Relations**

*“Modern history of Europe begins under stress of the Ottoman conquest.”*

*Lord Acton*

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The view that the Vienna Concert was not a normative inter-national European order, based on old dynasts carefully configuring the balance of power is not an unusual one. In fact, it is said to stand in stark contrast to the contemporary project of European integration, which is said to epitomize a truly normative universal order transcending previously divided ‘nations’. This brings us back to the initial problem about the mismatch between a universalizing ‘moderntiy’ and the territorially fractured international system it coincides with. It could be argued that the process of European integration eventually resolves the contradiction by creating a capitalist super-state, at least within the confines of the ‘Old World’. While this argument faces various historical challenges due the origins of the unification process in the geopolitical context of the cold war, the most obvious objection would be the continuously limited geographical scope within which European integration takes place. In other words, rather than overcoming fragmentation in favour of universalism, fragmentation persists, arguably more forcefully in form of the ‘Fortress Europe’ (eg. Ireland 1991). This is best illustrated by the continuing refusal of full membership to the secular, free market, NATO member, Turkey.<sup>92</sup> After all, the first Turkish application was made on 14 April 1987, more than twenty years ago. Accession negotiations, formally launched in 2005 still have not produced tangible results, even though Turkey is a formidable and reliable cornerstone of the West’s geostrategic design in the region since 1952. It seems, therefore, that the European Union, far from being the epitome of a capitalist superstate, still has borders that are constituted by ‘logics’ that do not lend themselves easily to either a geopolitical or capitalist reasoning. In other words, the contradiction between the universal and the particular, epitomized in the eastern question, persists.

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<sup>92</sup> This was reconfirmed in April 2009 when US President Obama’s bid to grant Turkey EU membership was swiftly rejected by the French President Sarkozy and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The following chapter will locate the origins of this continuing paradoxical division within what Edward Said has famously identified as ‘Orientalist’ practice. The way this concept is adapted here is, however, not so much in relation to the colonial experience of Britain and France and their attempt to establish hierarchical relationships between ‘East’ and ‘West’ as a means of economic exploitation. Even though it is true that “the ‘ideology’ of Orientalism was inextricably tied to Western hegemony,” (Kabbani 1986: 138), the study of this practice reveals, as Bryan Turner pointed out, more “about the origins of the West, not the origins of the East” (Turner 1994: 100). In other words, Orientalism will not be looked at as the ideological superstructure of a materially determined imperial expansion, but as a strategy of maintaining internal European social relations. Orientalism is, therefore, understood here as a specifically European practice, which, above all “helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (Said 2003 [1978]). This practice has many applications, amongst them literary reflections, policy making and academic research. This chapter will focus on the conception of Orientalism as a discursive means, i.e. “a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’,” (Said 2003 [1978]) which produces an external ‘mirror image’.

Taking the long view of Orientalist practice will reveal, however, that there was no necessity for ‘the Orient’ to become Europe’s mirror image (Yapp 1992) at a time when the discoveries provided a much more radical example of difference (Cocker 1998; cf. Jahn 2000). In other words, it will be argued that Orientalism’s origin does not lie in a demarcation of “the boundary between the *ancient regime* and the modern” (Aijaz 1994: 166). Instead, it will be argued here, that this historical practice developed out of the various geopolitical encounters with ‘Orientals’ in general and the Ottoman Empire in particular from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. While it is conducive to various ‘modern’ political projects, notably imperialism, this is not the underlying socio-historical origin, not least since the ‘European’ identity, Said and others emphasize, is itself fractured into various national forms.

The argument is substantiated in five steps. First, the relationship between the European enlightened political subject and Orientalism will be problematized. This will reveal that Orientalist depictions of the Ottoman Empire or ‘the Turk’ are not unique products of the Enlightenment or modernity in Europe, but emerged within specific social and geopolitical contexts and found different expressions. Secondly, it will be shown that far away from coinciding with the formation of a pan-European

identity, Orientalism was first established as a response of the Catholic establishment to the Reformation more than to the Ottoman menace. Thirdly, it will be argued that rather than having its origin in the formation of European progress, it was specific competitive encounters between different European and Ottoman precapitalist polities, engaging in geopolitical accumulation, that eventually produced this divide. Fourth, a brief reconstruction of Ottoman-European relations in general and European Philhellenism in particular will demonstrate how Orientalism shaped the further European and Ottoman trajectories alike. Within this territorial and national reformulation of Orientalism, the Greek War of Independence is a crucial juncture. From 1821 to 1923 the 'East' and 'West' dividing line was physically manifested along the Greco-Ottoman territorial border. This will explain, finally, that even though the further spread of capitalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought a general decrease in the geopolitical nature of the East/West divide, this still did not lead to the diminishing of its discursive substance, which is so solid that it survived into the 21<sup>st</sup> century North Atlantic zone of liberal peace.

It is important to mention at this point that this reflection on the problematique of Orientalism does not imply the commitment to a postcolonial theoretical perspective in the entire thesis. For as Bryan Turner and Simon Bromley, amongst others, have duly pointed out “the conceptual basis on which that critique is founded, [...] does not lend itself unambiguously to the task of reformulating perspectives” (Turner 1994: 31) and “does little to provide us with the tools with which to build an alternative understanding of the region itself” (Bromley 1994: 12). Re-interpreting the origins of Orientalism does help, however, to understand the social underpinnings of the dynastic European international system within which Ottoman disintegration took place as well as the aforementioned practices of methodological nationalism. It explains, for example, forms of interactions with the Ottoman Empire that appear irreconcilable with *Realpolitik* and, most importantly, it de-naturalizes Ottoman decline and, in doing so, provides the epistemological and ontological openings that allow for the non-deterministic, non-teleological and non-Orientalist reading of the process of late and post-Ottoman national state formation this thesis aims at providing.

## 6.2 The European Political Subject and Orientalist Practice

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (1989), the word 'Orientalism' was in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries used to refer to the work of the orientalist, a scholar versed in the languages and literatures of the East; and in the world of the arts to identify a character, style or quality commonly associated with the Eastern nations. However, these studies are not necessarily value-free but always based on the assumption that "the Orient and everything in it was, if not patently inferior to, then in need of corrective study by the West" (Said 2003 [1978]: 41). This was motivated by the West's or Europe's both desire and need to set "itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground 'self'" (Said 2003 [1978]: 3).

Out of all the critiques launched against this practice, it was Edward Said's that was the most influential one. Whether it can be considered, as is frequently argued, "by far the most effective" (Macfie 2002: 8), will be established in what follows. In any case, Said's 'Orientalism' provides the entry point for many, if not most reflections on this subject. The detection of Orientalist representations as early as in Aeschylus's play on *The Persians* (Said 2003 [1978]: 21) raises the question whether this form of 'underground self' is a transhistorical 'necessity', intricate in the European 'self'. Contrary to such an essentialised assumption, Said continuously emphasizes the requirements of imperial and colonial subjugation of the 'orientals' as the background of most Orientalist representations and practices, particularly in British and French literature. However, colonialism only constitutes one part of the explanation. Said equally locates the origins of Orientalism in the specific social conditions of 'modern' Europe itself. To him, Orientalism is bound up with the formation of modern states, whose rulers require a substitute for the divine legitimization that was compromised by the secular ideology of the Enlightenment. While this argument may overestimate how swiftly Europe's societies were 'secularised' beyond the expropriation of clerical possessions, it is the transformation to capitalism and the intrinsic de-personalization of social relations that is more crucial in this regard. The freeing of the individual has generated a 'form of paranoia', as Said put it, that led to Western projections of the oriental other as an aggressive outward expression of this 'ego-anxiety' (Said 2003 [1978]: 72). The aim behind this critique is to illustrate that there is no transhistorically inimical relationship between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident' (Yeğenoğlu 2006: 248), but that this oppositional difference was socially created specifically within European modernity. Thus, rather than a continuity of inter-faith hostilities fuelled by mutually

exclusive messianic drives of Christianity and Islam respectively (cf. Huntington 1996), this antagonism does not persist *despite* European 'progress', but *because* of it. In other words, the social condition of enlightened modernity, the breakdown of moral spiritual authority of the Church and divine legitimacy necessitates the Orient as a constitutive element to discursively manifest novel forms of sovereignty. The social transformations unique to Europe towards capitalist modernity, which alienate the individual from its traditional social structures, produce new forms of political subjectivity that generate an aggressive outward motion. This is unique to capitalism, and must therefore also be unique to Western Europe, where it first emerged.

Indeed, it is here that Orientalism meets the Nietzschean explanation of nationalism. European sovereignty transforms subjects into citizens, i.e. personal relations of domination are replaced by depersonal forms of formally or legally equal political subjects. These individuals organize themselves within nation-states according to the conventional liberal internationalist narrative, rather than 'Europe'. Nation-states, thus, coincide with the "new order in freedom, based upon the autonomy of the individual" (Kohn 1967: 237). In other words, collective identities are containerized within *national* states as the *prima facie* political institution through which this new free political agency is expressed. However, nationalism not only constitutes a form of political emancipation, it equally embodies the notion of a crisis of the political subject. Alienated by the 'the coldest of all *cold* monsters' as Nietzsche put it (Nietzsche 2005), the modern abstract and de-personal state requires a form of social identification previously supplied by spiritual forms of identity, mostly in the form of the Abrahamic religions. This moment of crisis that evolves out of the process of alienation can, therefore, equally generate a momentum for social change. The controlled introduction of collective social identities can be interpreted, therefore, as a form of maintaining established forms of political power by the old regime (Mayer 1981; Halperin 1997). However, this strategy relied not only on the projection and imagination of one's own community, but, equally, on establishing its 'outside' realm' as an intrinsic part of its 'self'. Orientalism's central purpose is understood as legitimating secular/Enlightened Western European statecraft and developmental agency. Thus, as Simon Bromley observes, "the sharp, theoretical dichotomy between 'West' and 'East' was only formulated in the modern political theory of the Renaissance (...) the origins of 'Orientalism' were thus intimately related to the process of self-definition that accompanied the transition to capitalism

in Europe and the ensuing European conquest of the globe” (Bromley 1994: 14f). Besides this political function of Orientalism, there is also a persistent sociological function, whereby the Orient serves to answer, according to Turner, “one of the formative questions of classical sociology – why did industrial capitalism first emerge in the West? [Orientalism] is consequently an essential feature of an intellectual accounting system which [foundationally] hinges upon a basic East/West contrast” (Turner 1994: 18). Thus, there appear to be various ways to associate capitalist development, nationalism and Orientalism, whereby new forms of collective identities, themselves an outcome of social conditions specific to capitalist modernity, operate through the creation of alterity, and the demarcation of an inimical or inferior ‘outside’.

Indeed, it is here that the contradiction arises: If multiple nationalisms within Europe are defined in opposition to each other, yet at the same time they all belong to a European macro-identity defined by its opposition to the Orient, the unity provided by ‘the anti-Oriental’ European identity should supersede the contradictions *within* Europe. Historically this is difficult to substantiate if looked at the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Theoretically, however, nationalism and Orientalism, instead of providing complementary explanations for the same social phenomenon – difference – are in fact competing explanations, both based on the depersonalisation of socio-political relations. Since the societal and socio-psychological differentiations typical of modernity logically preclude a unifying identity such as Europe, or rather, if modern conditions dictate the ‘invention’ of mutually exclusive and reciprocally defined nationalisms, it appears difficult to argue for the need of a European meta-identity that precisely supersedes the fragmentations logically implied, according to the Nietzschean theory of nationalism, in European capitalist ‘modernity’.

This contradiction also conjures a wider problem with Said’s account: the notion of ‘Europe’. If anything, the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century history of capitalist expansion in Europe has demonstrated that its development was uneven and refracted by a multiplicity of pre-existing European territorial states while its spread was mediated through geopolitical struggles. Thus, the initial phase of capitalist development was characterized by the intensification of difference, rather than the emergence of universality in the form of Europe. This trajectory has been convincingly explained by the theory of uneven and combined development

(Rosenberg 1996). In short, engaging the notion of a cohesive European projection of an inferior Orient cannot accommodate Europe's internal fragmentations.

This reveals yet again the problem of linking *all* crucial historical conjunctures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the emergence of this one universal notion of modernity. This problem is also not overcome by identifying the Renaissance rather than capitalism as the historical point from which, "European political thinkers in the age of Absolutism repeatedly sought to define the character of their own world by opposition with that of the Turkish order" (Anderson 1974: 397), since it assumes a social transformation that had by and large not taken place until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, even if the necessity of a mirror image is accepted, this still does not explain why the *Orient* in general and the 'the Turk' in particular gained the referential position in Europe's self-imagination. Why is it the 'Orient' serves this oppositional function over 'the Russian Ivan', 'the Slavs', 'the Bolsheviki', or for that matter the natives in the Americas? While the concept of Orientalism understood in Said's terms accurately captures social practices prevalent from the Renaissance, to the Enlightenment, to modern capitalism, the choice of the 'Orient' over any other potential 'constitutive outside' or 'other' requires an explanation.

To sum this up, Said's Orientalism leaves at least four questions. First, there remains a question about chronology. Orientalist discourse emerged long before the social transformation that generated a state of 'ego anxiety' in Europe. Second, the idea of a pan-European identity beyond individual nationalisms during the 19<sup>th</sup> century clashes with the simultaneous emergence of various, reciprocally defined, nationalisms. Third, the geographical focus on the 'Orient' is left unexplained. This becomes evident in the light of various alternative readily available 'others'. Fourth, Said's critique reifies Orientalism by making an 'Occidentalism' argument about the generic character of 'Western' societies, their uniform need for discursive 'alterity' and their unvarying focus on the Orient. Regardless of all of these problems, Said provides an extensive and cogent portrayal of the concrete historical as well as contemporary reality of a European tradition of Orientalism. The establishment of this tradition, it will be shown, has severe consequences for the application of *Realpolitik*.

### 6.3 Luther and Süleyman

One prominent way in which this Orientalist tradition is expressed is in culturalist and essentialist assumptions of a religiously motivated expansionist drive of Islam.<sup>93</sup> However, this ‘Myth of Confrontation’ (Halliday 1995) is not necessarily a product of a 19<sup>th</sup> century transformation, but followed a long tradition already expressed in notions of ‘the Turk’, to speak with Luther, as the ‘Servant of the Antichrist’.<sup>94</sup> This ‘Turk’ has shaped European political discourse at the very latest from the conquest of Constantinople 1453 onwards. Hence, the depiction of the Ottomans as the epitome of evil did not necessarily spring from a modern or early modern European social condition, but had been institutionalized prior to the transformations associated with ‘modernity’. Initially, this ‘tradition’ was given a decisive boost, not by Luther himself as the quote above suggests, but by the threat his 95 theses posed to Catholic unity. The Catholic Roman heritage, while by no means rock solid, had nevertheless been spared any major challenge ever since the Eastern Schism in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Rather, Christian unity had just been reinforced by the success of the Spanish *Reconquista* in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This period of unanimity changed, however, with the Reformation, itself the result of socio-economic more than theological issues, which saw “Christian unity ... severely impaired,” ...as a result of which “the old antithesis of Christian versus Muslim was replaced by the new polarity of ‘civilised Europeans’ versus ‘uncivilised barbarians’” (Delanty and Campling 1995: 67) with the latter applying to Protestants just as much as to the coincidentally expanding ‘Turks’.

24 years after Luther’s theses were published and Protestantism gained momentum in Germany, the Ottoman onslaught hit at the Catholic Church’s heart with the occupation of Buda by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1541. This meant that the Holy Roman Emperor found himself under pressure from two ends. To the South he had lost vast territories to Süleyman’s advancing troops, whereas Protestantism had emerged in the Northern part of the Empire and started to pose a just as

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<sup>93</sup> The author does not take issue with the empirical observation of expansionism of various ‘Islamic’ Empires as such. What is problematized here instead is the explanation of various vastly different forms of expansionism with reference to a *single* religion (cf. Karsh 2007). While Europe’s expansion equally requires different explanations at different times (e.g. Spanish colonial vs. British capitalist expansion; ‘informal’ vs. ‘formal’ Imperialism, etc.; cf. chapter 3, p 85), so does ‘Islamic expansionism’ require historically specific explanations at different times reflecting peculiar reproductive strategies of various notionally ‘Islamic’ social formations (e.g. Ottoman, Mamluk, Seljuk, etc.). Culturalist or religious a priori assumptions about the expansionary dynamic of ‘Islam’ itself are therefore highly problematic.

<sup>94</sup> ‘The Pope is the spirit of Antichrist and the Turk the body of Antichrist’, original: ‘[P]apa est spiritus Antichristi, et Turca est caro Antichristi. Helffen beyde einander wurgen, hic corpore et gladio, ille doctrina et spiritu.’ (Luther 1967: 135, 330)



formidable threat, ideological for the time being, as the Ottomans posed a geopolitical one. The coincidental arrival of the combined threat, however, posed a double challenge to the Habsburg Charles V, not least since the continuous defeats of Catholic powers at the hands of infidels or even agents of the incarnation of the 'Antichrist', were said to have assisted the success of Protestantism significantly at a time when political power was derived from divine legitimacy (Iyigun 2008). Even though Habsburg weakness frequently translated into the success of Protestantism, this was arguably owed much more to the relief from indulgence payments Protestantism offered, than a lack of theological justification of Austrian rule caused by military defeat at the hands of the infidel. Popular perception of an Ottoman threat was not great outside of the South-eastern European border regions. Fischer-Galati observes that during the 1520s nothing seemed to indicate in any way "that the peasants considered the Turks either as enemies or as liberators, or as having directly or indirectly contributed to their sufferings; the Turk did not seem to concern them one way or the other" (Fischer-Galati 1954: 49). If it didn't concern the peasantry, it certainly concerned the Catholic establishment, who, nevertheless, treated Protestantism as the more serious threat and rushed to deal with this problem with much more resolve. As soon as Protestant princes entered into alliances with the Ottoman Empire in their struggles for legitimacy with Catholic Powers, Charles V swiftly reversed his priorities. However, Charles was unable to engage both the Ottoman as well as the Protestant front simultaneously. Despite Luther's 'Orientalist' perception of the Ottomans, it was their advance that gave Protestantism some breathing space. The much more serious 'infidel' in form of the 'Turk' thus at least deferred the Catholic backlash against the Protestant infidel, arguably until the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618. As opposed to Charles V's earlier reluctance to commit to the anti-Ottoman struggle, he increasingly realized his militarily precarious situation which at the same time opened up the opportunity to gather Protestant support in the effort against a perceivably common Islamic threat.

The Ottoman advance, thus, had two slightly contradictory effects. On the one hand, it led to a temporary intermission of the sectarian conflict the Reformation had generated. On the other hand, it put ample pressure on the Catholic establishment to allow Protestant sectarianism to be strengthened. This delay of the ensuing struggle was eventually codified in the 1532 Peace of Nuremberg. German Protestantism, it is sometimes argued, thus, owes nothing short of its survival to the Ottoman campaigns into Europe (Fischer-Galati 1959). This is because the Catholic Habsburg dynasty

found itself in no position to restore “Christian unity within a new Holy Roman Empire with Charles as its emperor” (Fischer-Galati 1954: 47) when hard pressed at the same time to defend the Empire’s southeastern borders. In a different way, however, the Ottoman threat could, at least temporarily, help overcome the division it had allowed to mature by posing a constant geopolitical threat. By identifying the common enemy as Islam, sectarianism, if not subdued, could at least be guarded more easily. This episode of the coincidental arrival of the Protestant and Ottoman challenges to Catholic power in Europe goes to show that the Ottoman infringement on the European borders was far from marginal or external to European relations, but that it shaped not only Europe’s relations to the rest of the world but also influenced intra-European relations in a meaningful way.

#### **6.4 The Ottoman Origin of Orientalism**

This pre-empted the process of ‘otherization’ in Said’s account. However, it was not based on Islam or a more generic notion of ‘the East’ or ‘Orient’ but, the much more tangible menace of Ottoman conquest specifically (Neumann and Welsh 1991: 329). Pointing at the concrete historical background of the Ottoman encounter can reveal how the imagining of the Orient is derived from geopolitical conflicts in southeastern Europe, rather than the necessities of the colonial enterprise. Not colonialism or imperialism, but geopolitical accumulation, which was the principle mode of social reproduction of all participating parties, caused the emergence of ‘the Turk as Antichrist’ as a predecessor to Orientalism.

From within the great European powers it was Britain which had pioneered diplomatic, non-violent and peaceful relations with the Ottoman Empire and which advocated Ottoman preservation from the 17<sup>th</sup> century up until the outbreak of the First World War – a position that could be explained with reference by Britain’s territorial secluded position vis-à-vis the Ottoman expansion. This shows that various Orientalisms evolved within various European societies, dependent on the specific social constitution and position and encounters with the ‘Orient’ and the ‘Turk’. Equally, the Orientalist perception of Ottoman rule was neither uniform nor static, but evolved in accordance with the uneven, fractured and multiple European developmental paths

This is also reflected in a considerable amount of Western political thought, which engages the image of ‘the Turk’ or, more commonly, Oriental Despotism, a

concept the origins of which far exceed Wittfogel's relatively recent, if important, analysis (Wittfogel 1957). Amongst the most prominent analyses of 'Eastern Despotism' – or more precisely – 'Turkic Despotism' (i.e. Ottoman rule) are Jean Bodin (*Les six livres de la République*), Nicolló Machiavelli (*Il Principe*) and Montesquieu (*De l'esprit des lois*). *Il Principe*, for example, develops a binary typology of government, "either by a prince to whom everyone is subservient and whose ministers, with his favour and permission, help govern, or by a prince and by nobles whose rank is established not by favour of the prince but by their ancient lineage." While the latter describes European feudalism, the former applies to French Absolutism *and* the Ottoman Sultan. Non-feudal rule might bring defensive advantages, according to Machiavelli, but he is also clear that it implies less 'freedom' and a way out of the 'abasement of the people' (Springborg 1992: 280-81). However, as Lucette Valensi shows, relying on the earliest reflections of Ottoman sovereignty from Venice, what is usually implied by this 'Prince' is the Aristotelian concept of 'Tyranny', rather than the notorious concept of 'Oriental Despotism' which came to dominate the initial European accounts of Ottoman rule, notably the Venetian ambassador's to the Porte, Peitro Foscarini (Valensi 1987: 2f).

The distinction between 'despotism' and 'tyranny' is crucial, however, as these two concepts, while closely related, actually denote different forms of rule. The Aristotelian concept of 'tyranny' could have positive connotations as it merely referred to the absence of nobility. "Turkish 'tyranny' implied not only a terrifying experience, an oppressive regime, and an exotic ensemble of political and social relations, but also the legitimacy and *success of the empire*" (Cirakman 2001: 55-56). Whilst 'tyranny' simply indicated a strong and centralised form of rule, such as the Ottoman, this does not necessarily imply unjust or illegitimate rule. 'Despotism' on the other hand connotes "abusive, excessive, and degenerate governmental form(s)" (Valensi 1987: 76), i.e. a illegitimate rule. Jean Bodin, using the concept of 'tyranny', considered the Ottoman tolerance towards all Abrahamic faiths to be a model for emulation for Europe. "The King of the Turks, who rules over a great part of Europe, safeguards the rites of religion as well as any prince in this world. Yet he constrains no one, but on the contrary permits everyone to live according as his conscience dictates" (1962). Bodin, writing from a background of religious wars in France, is not alone in describing the Sultan's rule in such positive terms. The relatively positive depiction of 'Tyranny' was originally based on the observation of the *Şeriat*, the Islamic just order, notably preventing the accumulation of landed property. In strictly

legalistic terms, there was no private property until the introduction of the 1856 Land Code (*Arazi Kanunnamesi*) which allowed the transfer of state lands to individuals. It is indeed these absolute property rights of the Sultan that underlie many Renaissance and Enlightenment analyses of Ottoman rule, such as Montesquieu's: "There is no despotism so injurious as that whose prince declares himself proprietor of all landed estates and heir of all subjects: the consequence is always the abandonment of cultivation, and if the ruler interferes in trade, the ruin of every industry" (Montesquieu and Goldschmidt 1979: 67-66). However, despite this legalistic interpretation, in practical terms, the 'Oriental Tyrant' could not rule so arbitrarily outside of the 'good, God-given' order, i.e. the same *Şeriat* that in theory entitled the Sultan to all land more profoundly established God as the ultimate proprietor and the Sultan's control over it was contingent upon him maintaining a just order as a trustee of God's land. The just order of Islam, and with it the powerful clergy (*ulema*), rather than granting the right to arbitrary rule, established caps on surplus-extraction, protected the direct producers and preached religious tolerance, while curtailing the ruling class, especially in the periphery. Thus, even though there might not have necessarily been a powerful 'moderating class' like the nobility in Europe, the *Şeriat* also constrained the Sultan's agency. Apart from this normative religious frame by which the exercise of Sultanic powers was restricted, there were a variety of classes and class alliances comprising landed aristocrats, governors, as well as bureaucrats within Istanbul that effectively limited the Sultan's powers.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century a conceptual shift occurred. "After that date subjects of the sultan were increasingly said to suffer under the 'tyrannical yoke' of their 'despotic' ruler, since they were obliged to blindly obey him..." (Kaiser 2000: 9). Hence, the transition from the term "tyranny" to that of "despotism" indicates a radical change in the European images of the Ottoman Empire (Koebner 1951). Asli Cirakman describes a similar shift, but points out that it is only with the beginning Enlightenment in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that Ottoman rule is much more frequently described as 'Oriental Despotism'. He elaborates on the conceptual difference between 'Tyranny' as a personal, permeable, i.e. non-structural condition of exploitative and arbitrary rule, and 'Despotism' which refers to an underlying cultural-social condition of regionally specific forms of government – invented only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and applicable specifically to the Ottoman Empire (Cirakman 2001). It is the emergence of the concept of 'Despotism' which is so specific to early modern European political philosophy that requires an explanation. As such it is

pertinent to consider Lucette Valensi's questions: "by what metamorphosis did the mighty body of the Ottoman colossus change into an ailing monster? What could turn an emperor who aspired to universal monarchy and seemed capable of attaining it into an unworthy ruler" (Valensi 1987: 79)?

Most of the explanations for the shift from 'Tyranny' to 'Despotism' focus on an emerging Ottoman weakness or, to use the common teleological reading of Ottoman history, 'the beginning of the End' discussed in chapter 3. On the European side, Ottoman defeat is said to have instilled a growing sense of superiority which meant that European observers went from admiration and fear to subordination, thus, setting the ground for the Orientalist depiction of Ottoman rule. These changing fortunes are, however, not as historically clear cut as they might appear at first sight. The Empire's territorial stagnation was already discussed at some length and need not be disputed here. Equally, however, neither can 1683 be read as the establishment of an almighty European superiority.

A more revealing aspect that arguably contributed to this paradigm shift is the already discussed damage to the traditional Ottoman social structure from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards that these geopolitical encounters had caused. This means that the crucial difference was not with a European military superiority, or an increase in Ottoman arbitrary rule (at least in case of the Sultan), but with the emergence of much more exploitative social relations in the periphery which were caused by the breakdown of Ottoman order. This social transformation and the rise of the *âyân*s, led to a decline of the *Şeriat*. The arrival of 'Despotism' is, thus, substantiated by the already discussed social transformations within the Empire and was consequently reflected in the European accounts as the shift from 'tyranny' to 'despotism'.

While this is a crucial historical development underlying the paradigm shift, locating the source of social change exclusively within the Ottoman Empire equally overlooks a central aspect of European transformation. As Bryan Turner argues,

"the debate about oriental despotism took place in the context of uncertainty about enlightened despotism and monarchy in Europe. The Orientalist discourse on the absence of civil society in Islam was a reflection of basic political anxieties about the state of political freedom in the West. In this sense, the problem of Orientalism was not the Orient but the Occident. These problems and anxieties were consequently transferred onto the Orient which became, not a representation of the East, but a caricature of the West" (Turner 1994: 34).

In a similar fashion, Thomas Kaiser has argued that ‘Despotism’, much more than actually representing an Orientalist treatment of ‘the East’ or Ottoman society more particularly, was what he calls a “standard model” used to depict the ‘despot within’, i.e. the outgoing Ancient Regime (Kaiser 2000). In other words, the transformation towards ‘Despotism’ was not simply something empirically observable or a mere reflection on Ottoman internal instability. The shift from ‘tyranny’ to ‘despotism’ also reflected the European transformation towards absolutism.

It can be observed, therefore, that the European concepts through which the Ottoman Empire was (mis)understood changed due to the specific social transformations and various shifts in the internal and external positions of European dynastic states more than due to a change within the Ottoman Empire. ‘Oriental Despotism’, as Kaiser observes, is better understood as a term to describe the establishment of absolutist rule in Europe, rather than the ‘backward’ and ‘despotic’ mirror-image of the Ottomans. Thus, instead of reflecting a social transformation within European societies, Orientalism was initially an inter-dynastic practice, “...a club of (western) Christian monarchs [which] produced its first forms of organisation against the Muslim, i.e. infidel, Turk” (Halliday 1992: 440).

### **6.5 The Denial of Ottoman Agency-A Brief Survey of European-Ottoman Relations**

Within literature on this ‘international society’, which also deals with the Ottoman Empire, this kind of *longe-durée* view on European-Ottoman relations is fairly uncommon. Instead, a narrative of European universalization explains these relations in form of a teleology, whereby the formerly alien Ottoman polity matures until it finally enters the world of civilized European states in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first officially recognized form of cooperation as an active subject of international relations akin to any of the other Great Powers is said to have taken place in July 1840 with the drawing up of the Convention for the Pacification of the Levant. The 1856 Peace of Paris ending the Crimean War is conventionally understood to mark the beginning of ‘full membership’ of the Ottoman Empire in the post-Napoleonic Concert of European Powers, or the international society (Naff 1984: 143; Göl 2003). This argument will be referred to here as the incorporation thesis. Here, Ottoman international agency is only fully recognizable once it has been ‘incorporated’ into the

European society of states, implying a prior inability to adhere to the legally and institutionally regulated societal nature of European international relations. This argument could be supported also from a historical materialist perspective, since British imperialist expansion has made the Ottoman bulwark function towards Russia indispensable, whereas it was previously only regarded as a – temporary – anomaly in Europe. Thus, European modernization in Grotian terms inferred a foreign policy shift, which was increasingly dominated by *raison d'état* thinking allowing for alliances with the Ottomans, whose own modernization program had made them amenable to entering the European club. This involved a re-formulation of the “law between Christian nations” to the “law between civilized nations”, seemingly constituting a recognizable shift in the dealings with the former ‘Despot’.

However, as opposed to the incorporation thesis’ major premise, this formal introduction of the Ottoman Empire into the European inter-state system did not catapult the Ottoman-European relationship into a new and different age. The change this act of recognition at Paris instigated was not as dramatic as is suggested. Ottoman rule was not, as a result, considered a part of the European ‘international society’ as is evidenced by the swift relegation of the Porte from a welcome new member to the ‘Sick Man of Europe’. Conversely, 1856 was also not the beginning of formalized foreign exchanges, but Ottoman diplomatic activity burgeoned already from Karlowitz 1698 onwards as a result of territorial stagnation. Given the Empire’s proximity to the European theatre, it had always played a part in European politics.

Hence, the Ottoman presence is either understood as an anomaly temporarily setting camp in Europe and treating the Porte as an element of disturbance or as an active and important participant in European politics which was not illegitimate or unusual in principle. This was the case for some early Protestant princes, who had formed anti-Catholic alliances, thus leading to more pragmatic forms of interaction with the Porte. These two perspectives do not occur in a sequence, however, but appear in less systematic, random and sometimes simultaneous instances. It is problematic, therefore, to think of Ottoman-European relations in strictly chronological terms, for identifying watersheds like 1840 or 1856 fails to account for the degree to which multiple European states reacted in different ways in specific situations to the Ottoman Empire. However, this is not to say, that there is not a special quality attached to the Ottoman as opposed to any of the other Powers of the Concert. After all, the process of ‘incorporation’ was never really complete, neither in 1856 nor in 2009. In this sense, process should not be confused with linearity.

A more useful way to understand this, to some extent schizophrenic relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, is in terms of a dialectical negotiation between two extremes. On the one hand, Ottoman agency can be seen as autonomous, i.e. the Ottoman state/unit functioning as the southeastern branch of the European inter-state system. Territorial decline generated, paradoxically, the establishment of such an Ottoman international agency. On the other hand, the geopolitically and financially weakened state of the Porte made it easy to perceive the Ottoman Empire, in good Orientalist fashion, as an object, rather than subject of European Politics. This ‘objectification’ of the Ottoman realm was duly exercised by the Great Powers who distributed its territories amongst themselves, if in need for territorial compensation as a means of mediating conflicts distant from Ottoman lands (Reinowski 2006). Ottoman preservation was therefore also necessary “simply because its demise would raise problems so dangerous that general European war and upheaval could not be avoided. European cabinets thus relied upon concert diplomacy (...) to avoid as long as possible the inevitable scramble over the spoils, and to insure that no one power acquired exclusive preponderance in an area affecting the interests of all” (Elrod 1976: 166). This position as a political football of European Great Power politics was comparable to Poland’s position in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998: 156), which even led to a little known Polish-Ottoman defensive Alliance in 1790 (Adanir 2005: 401f). The Porte’s position differed, nevertheless, from Poland’s in two important aspects. Firstly, apart from peripheral territorial tradeoffs, mostly to Russia’s advantage, the Empire – in stark contrast to Poland – managed to avoid outright dissection, or partition, until the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, which was met by a highly successful Turkish war of resistance.<sup>95</sup> Secondly, and more importantly, Poland never served as a definitional referent for the idea of ‘European-ness’ in the same way the Ottoman Empire did.<sup>96</sup>

While the usage of the Turkish mirror was mostly sporadic, it became more systematic during the post-Napoleonic conservative ‘restoration’ – a project that was in dire need for a unifying projection. Consequently, the Holy Alliance treaty explicitly referred to ‘members of one and the same Christian nation’ (Adanir 2005:

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<sup>95</sup> The Turkish War of Independence brought a revision to the territorial designs aimed at curbing Turkish power, at the expense of the original territorial promises to Greece, Armenia and a still to be agreed form of Kurdish autonomy. These provisions were internationally codified in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. This also included the controversial exchange of Turkish/Muslim with Greek/Christian populations.

<sup>96</sup> While Poland specifically never came to constitute Europe’s ‘other’, it was nevertheless part of the Slavic and Communist worlds, which did acquire this kind of function.



402). Thus, the inter-dynastic ‘concert’ was not only based on the inclusive notion of a unified Christian/European ‘self’, but inevitably equally involved the *exclusion* of Islam. In other words, the ‘Turkish menace’ had a consolidating effect on the post-war European consciousness. At the same time, however, it was especially the British understanding of the balance of power that included a fortification of the Pax Ottomanica and, in consequence, extensive cooperation with the Ottomans. This developed, as we have seen, into a main British policy of strict territorial preservation, which served the requirements of the newly formed international order better than outright confrontation. A most likely rapturous partition, as envisaged by France and Russia at various stages would have opened Pandora’s Box in the region.

In and of itself the ‘incorporation’ thesis of the International Society approach sheds light only on the formalistic diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire in European Great Power politics, while failing to identify the real rationale behind Ottoman preservation. To be sure, this and the historically observable increase in volumes of diplomatic, commercial and cultural exchange are undeniably very significant developments. However, the English School approach fails to illuminate the geostrategic centrality of the Ottoman lands for the British Empire and, therefore fails to explain the crucial determination of the political developments it describes accurately. Equally, it cannot accommodate the contradicting, but important function of the Ottoman polity as a passive object of European self-identification. The Ottoman polity fulfilled these two functions simultaneously, depending on specific circumstances, rather than as two separate sequences within a long-term assimilating trajectory.

## **6.6 The Orientalist Logic of Philhellenism**

Given that a balance of power rationale, if anything, had originally dictated the maintenance of Ottoman rule in the region, the European intervention in the Greek War of Independence defied both this rationale as well as the conservative spirit of the post-Napoleonic “restoration”. Apart from the need of Russian containment, this seeming contradiction becomes more understandable when considering the significance of the Philhellenic movement in Europe. As opposed to its own self-definition as a Hellenic model for a ‘modern’ geopolitical order in the Balkans or the Middle East, the Philhellenic movement was supported by enlightened absolutists like Charles X of France or Ludwig I of Bavaria.

However, the result of the Greek secession was significant to understanding Orientalism insofar as it allowed for a much more succinct demarcation of the realm of 'otherness' territorially. Extracting the perceivably European, Byzantine, Roman and Christian elements from the Islamic Ottoman realm, which had previously been an intricate part of that polity, allowed for a much more purified version of the 'Oriental Despot' in the form of an Ottoman administration which, by then, increasingly employed Muslim civil servants in the foreign ministry. Thus, what Said has called the 'imaginative geography' of Orientalism could now be elevated to a concrete physical geography along the Greco-Ottoman border. A 'spatial fix' of the divide, which could now be reproduced cartographically, thereby strengthening its social effectiveness, whereas previously, "Europe's uncertain boundaries increase the importance of historical, racial, ethnic, and cultural factors in constructing a Self vs. Other identity" (Müftüler-Bac 2000: 25). However, this instrumentalization is not accidental or simply a matter of convenience. The support of the Greek cause provided Europe's enlightened absolutist rulers with a discursive opening capable of fostering their crumbling legitimacy as the saviours of Occidental culture, values and of Christianity in southeastern Europe in opposition to an Empire that had stopped constituting an existential or even geopolitical threat a long time ago. Crucially, this did not necessarily imply the conscious creation of a pan-European identity, but was limited to an anti-Ottoman discourse. Paradoxically, however, this was marred with a diplomatic opening towards the Porte as dictated by balance of power politics.

The social structures generating these uneven and sometimes contradictory relations with the Ottoman Empire were highly differentiated throughout Europe, thus making it appear problematic to speak of a single European Orientalist practice, not least since Edward Said, in his original work makes a differentiation between French and British Orientalisms while attracting criticism for not having discussed a German variant (Said 1984: 14f). Various Orientalisms, thus\_differed, broadly speaking, between liberal early capitalist societies and absolutist continental European societies. Britain, for example, had less 'encounters with the Turk' but perceived Russia as a much more serious threat, whereas the economic dependency and geostrategic centrality for the maintenance of the British Empire made some form of interaction with the Ottoman Empire indispensable. The German states, Venice and, to a lesser extent, France tended to make heavier use of the 'oriental despot' because of the geographical proximity and the actual encounters with the perceived threat. At the specific conjuncture of the Greek revolt then, embracing the Greek 'liberation

paradigm' helped maintaining the crisis ridden European ruling dynasties, ever fearful of uprisings after the Napoleonic interlude had instilled the seeds for upheaval all over Europe. Initially this challenge was contained by restoring legitimacy, in part by saving Europe's lost Greek heritage from the Oriental yoke. In this regard it did not even matter that the neo-absolutist Kingdom of Greece established after independence was run by a German Catholic Prince whose reactionary regime had little in common with 'Hellenic' political traditions.

Thus, the substantial lack of any real implementation of an Athenian Republic on the Peloponnesus did not contradict the projections and imagination of European Philhellenism. This reorientation to the pan-European Hellenic heritage, suggesting a vision of political progress by concentrating on a common past, which was not matched by any genuine social transformation, was an adequate means to channel liberal spirits already unleashed. In other words, Philhellenism appeared to offer a unique opportunity to demonstrate the Enlightenment credentials of Absolutism. European Philhellenism was much more than just a spontaneous expression of sympathy with a 'Greek' people trying to overthrow the 'Asiatic Despot'. Cultivating Hellenism both at home and abroad was central to generating an "idealized vision of a reunified and reintegrated European civilization that would include its Greek progenitor" (Kasaba 2003: 2), better understood as absolutist crisis management, than an early form of internationalism.

Some postcolonial writers, most famously Martin Bernal, in his *Black Athena* (Bernal 1987; Lefkowitz and Rogers 1996; Hobson 2004: 2), already pointed at the Orientalist character of the Hellenic movement. The idealized version of a resurrected Hellenic civilization is pitched against Ottoman exploitation. However, as both Reşat Kasaba and Maria Koundoura have pointed out, once encountered first hand, the Philhellene's realizations were comparable to "a homecoming in which he [the Philhellene] figures as the modern day Odysseus returning to Ithaca only to find crass suitors surrounding his Penelope and occupying his home" (Kasaba 2003; Koundoura 2007). Greek society remained initially, at core, the Oriental society in opposition to which the European Enlightenment was supposed to define itself. The close relation between Orientalist practice and Philhellenism, or rather the Orientalist practice that Philhellenism was an intrinsic part of, had to deny 'Greek' social reality.

*From Orientalism to Slavophobia and Back*

However, the philhellenic imagination of Greece in place of the social reality on the ground was not only constructed in opposition to its former Ottoman overlord, but also in opposition to its predominantly Slavic geopolitical environment to the North. Europe has multiple mirrors and one of them was the Slavic world. These Slavophobic tendencies can be traced in the highly inflated liberal spirit of the Greek struggle. More precisely, the Greek ‘revolution’ gained much more international attention and support than the Serb ‘uprising’. This ‘uprising’, however, in fact preceded the Greek struggle. Observe the terminology: While Serbia’s struggle is described as a primitive ‘uprising’, the Greek ‘revolution’ appears to embody liberal values. This is not a discussion about semantic details. Rather, it is significant insofar as Greece could attract widespread support, literary and historiographic reflection in Europe, whereas Serbia’s ‘awakening’ was considered to be of a more backward variety. So was the Serb ‘uprising’ a more or less primitive peasant revolt while the Greek ‘revolution’ was firmly located within a liberal Enlightenment tradition which has its origins in a bourgeois merchant community? The conventional wisdom seems to confirm this and is best captured by Jelavich and Jelavich: “The Serbian revolt was carried on by a peasant people, fighting what was essentially a guerrilla war under local military leaders. Serbian society was not sophisticated or highly differentiated” (Jelavich and Jelavich 1977: 38) whereas Greeks were perceived to be just that. This was despite the fact that none of the initiators of the Etaria had lived under Ottoman rule themselves and that the core of the fighting force, the Klepts, were equally of peasant origin. This demonstrates, that ‘Orientalism’, if understood more generically as a practice of misrepresenting non-European societies for the purpose of self-reflection, is not in fact limited to the ‘Orient’ but can and does lead to reflections on the inferiority of many societies, which are reflected upon differently according to specific spatial and social circumstances.

## **6.7 The Enlargement of Europe and the Turkish Mirror**

This chapter started out by stating that European integration, at least in part, solved the contradiction between the universal and the particular. This is contradicted by the European fortification against its ‘outside’ which reproduces the contradiction in the form of Orientalist practices. Regardless of the fact that there are many European mirrors that prove this point, the successor state of the Ottoman Empire still occupies a unique position among them (Yapp 1992). Significant was the shift of the ‘Turkish

Mirror' in the European self-perception after the end of the Cold War. Turkey's 1987 bid for EU membership had its chances of success severely diminished when the classical post-World War 'outside' of the Warsaw Pact disappeared overnight. With the Eastern enlargement of the European Union spelling the definitive end of the Cold War as a catalyst for European integration, a fall back on to Orientalist practices appeared a readily available surrogate. In 1991 Jan Nederveen Pieterse went so far as to say that "Europe's historic frontier of confrontation with the world of Islam is being reactivated" (Pieterse 1991: 6). Thus, paradoxically, the breakdown of the Soviet Block, in which the NATO member Turkey played a significant role, has made it more difficult to join a Europe where definitional "boundaries had shifted from congruence with the line tracing the 'iron curtain' to one of civilizational divide – defined as religious difference" (Keyder 2006: 73). So when Western Europe rushed to embrace its long-estranged Eastern half after the iron curtain had fallen, the borders of Europe could now be redrawn according to presumed cultural affinity, rather than geopolitical expediency. Or as Müftüler-Bac put it, "the disappearance of the Soviet enemy eroded Turkey's position in the Europe. It no longer served a clear function, and thus was shunted to the back of the line of candidates for EU membership in the 1990s" (Müftüler-Bac 2000: 29). The fall of the Berlin Wall did, therefore, not lead, as J.G.A. Pocock argued in 1991 (1991), to an opening of European borders but simply to shifting them back from Europe's centre to where they had been prior to the Cold War, i.e. along the Greco-Turkish frontier. As Perry Anderson has recently observed, this shift of the demarcation between 'progress' and 'retardation' led to the revival of the "successor danger in Islamism", which, to many "arrière pensées" (Anderson 2008),<sup>97</sup> translated into a policy of rejecting the Turkish EU membership. In the meantime, as with the Orientalist practices of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this is at odds with the requirements of *Realpolitik* as the Turkish disenchantment with the European project shows signs of producing a geopolitical reorientation of Turkey from Europe towards a more assertive, possibly hegemonic role in the region. This includes the rapprochement with Armenia and the Kurdish leadership in Northern Iraq, peace building in Lebanon, the mediation between Syria and Israel, the US and Iran, Russia and Georgia and the active involvement with Hamas. This could be seen as the

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<sup>97</sup> Anderson's claim about a wide-spread European consensus about Turkish EU accession is problematic as was re-affirmed by the Franco-German rejection of President Obama's endorsement of Turkish EU accession; see Barysch (2009). This position is in contradiction to the UK's and that of the European Commission.

logical foreign policy extension of a pan-Islamic AKP government,<sup>98</sup> aiming at a disassociation from the West (Oğuzlu 2008). While Turkey's pacifying role in the region is arguably better understood as preparing the ground for a more aggressive expansion of Turkish capital, rather than outright geopolitical power into the former Ottoman world, it has yet to be seen whether this 21<sup>st</sup> century re-invention of the Pax Ottomanica will be at the expense of Turkey's traditionally transatlantic and European orientation.

Given this delicate danger of 'losing Turkey', the continental European opposition to the Turkish EU accession appears to contradict both economic rationale, but more importantly the geopolitical order of the day. This contradiction, it is argued here, can be explained by Orientalism. The reservations against Turkish membership are particularly strong in France, Germany and, in an apparent spirit of 1683, Austria. The UK and the US, along with the European Commission meanwhile, endorse membership. These different positions can be traced historically in the development of different Orientalist traditions. These are not only determined by previous geopolitical encounters with Ottoman invaders, but are, coming back to Said, owed to the specific fabric of individual mature capitalist societies. Anglo-Saxon liberal states build on notions of citizenship and nationalism distinct from race and ethnicity, embracing the original French republican model. British encounters with the Ottoman Empire, with the exception of the First World War, stand in the tradition of the Pax Ottomanica as an institution conducive to British interests, whereas the projection of inferiority focussed on the wider colonial world and Britain's long-standing geopolitical rival Russia. The continental notion of citizenship, on the other hand, is grounded in the idea of nationalism as ethno-linguistic, biologist and cultural divisions reflected in Herder, whereas the collective memory of 1683 appears to more alive the closer one gets to the Southeast. Thus, while the former group of states, along with the rational European bureaucracy, endorses Turkish membership, the latter, more inward looking societies, oppose the incorporation of its long-standing 'definitional other', especially at a time of internal crisis.

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<sup>98</sup> For an insight into the intellectual basis of this new political movement in Turkey see Knaus (2007); Özdalga (2000)

## 6.8 Conclusion

According to Said's famous treatise, Orientalism produces the Orient discursively and authoritatively. What this view tends to undervalue, however, is the concrete geopolitical encounter with the Ottoman Empire, which was not an invention of the Renaissance or the Enlightenment, but has its roots in the Ottoman advance on Europe.<sup>99</sup> Ottoman rule and the metaphorical 'Turk' served as the definitional European 'counter-image' from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century at the latest. This chapter has shown, that just as nation-state formation itself is not necessarily a result of a capitalist modernity universalizing itself, or intelligible exclusively in those terms, so is the practice of Orientalism not reducible to the 'requirements' of 'modern' European identity formation or colonial subordination. Rather, it is a historically grown practice. While this practice prevails as an ideational structure, it requires more spatio-temporally specific sociological explanations instead of the Orientalist meta-narrative suggested by Said.

This also means that 'Orientalism' is in fact not restricted to the Orient but produces many 'mirror images', such as the Slavic world. More concretely, Orientalist practice was intensified as a result of absolutist restoration at a time when diplomatic exchanges with the Ottoman Empire were on the rise. The European dynasts' preoccupation with the Hellenic struggle was not only born out of sympathy with a fellow Christian population rising against a Muslim exploitative regime, but was more owed to the crisis of European absolutism at the time. Many European enlightened autocrats were faced with the challenge of rebuilding their respective realms after Napoleonic rule when, coincidentally, liberal philosophy had shaken their very foundations. Their resurrection as legitimate rulers could not merely be grounded in restoring former divinely ordained glory, but required some form of modernist outlook which had to be meticulously separated from the anti-dynastic odour of the French Revolution so as to avoid any chances of real social change. Instead, it was their objective to foster a form of post-Napoleonic legitimacy which was capable of accommodating Enlightenment political philosophy with the social and political reality of maintaining absolutist power. This did not involve the creation of a pan-European identity, however, beyond the inter-dynastic bonds manifested in the Concert.

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<sup>99</sup> Said does in fact mention the European encounter with the Ottomans, as a "lasting trauma" contributing to Orientalism, but does not provide a central space for this trauma in his analysis (2003 [1978]: 59).

Thus, the Ottoman Empire fulfilled two contradicting functions in the building of modern Europe, one internal and one external. Internally, 'the Turk' provided the prime mirror-image that helped in maintaining legitimacy. Externally, however, British overseas expansion and Blue Water policies increasingly dictated the 'incorporation' of the Porte into European affairs. Later, as a result of the – uneven – spread of capitalist modernity, representations of the 'Orient' changed again, always reflecting the 'West's' developmental differences.

Thus, understanding Orientalism as a long-standing historical tradition, rather than a uniquely 'modern' practice, implies that it is not restricted to the Renaissance or the Enlightenment, but continues to (re)produce forms of religious and cultural antagonisms as epitomized in the dominant contemporary "civilisational" discourse (Huntington 1996; Müftüler-Bac 2000). These practices frequently clash with the pursuit of 'rational' foreign policy.

This Orientalist dialectic between cooperation and conflict with the Ottoman Empire goes to show, finally, that the international cannot be understood in terms of a Neo-Weberian notion of geopolitics as imposing purely 'rational choices' onto various actors. Rather, it is necessary to historicise various unique, but inter-related social dynamics within their specific contexts.



## 7 Conclusion

### Explaining the Emergence of the ‘Modern’ Post-Ottoman States System Towards an Inter-National Historical Materialism

*“The destiny of man is accomplished, and his freedom realized by absorption within the state, because only through the state does he attain coherence and acquire reality. It might, then, seem logical to conclude that such a state should embrace the whole of humanity. But this would be, nonetheless, erroneous, for it would conflict with another, essential feature of this metaphysic, namely, that self-realization and absorption into the whole is not a smooth, uneventful process, but the outcome of strife and struggle.”*

*Kedourie (1993: 43)*

#### 7.1 Introduction: The Making of the ‘International’ in the Balkans

On the highest level of abstraction, this thesis has attempted to reconcile the universal with the particular, the international with the social and the material with the ideational. This historical reconstruction of Ottoman ‘decline’ has revealed that there are no clear cut formulae capable of explaining the historically and socially specific resolutions of these contradictions and that, as a result, the eastern question remains wide open. This problem appears to be particularly relevant to the discipline of International Relations. Whereas they can be contained within the domestic sphere through legal and physical coercion, the contradiction between the universal and the particular remains, as RBJ Walker aptly put it, “between states, irresolvable” and that further “contradiction is guaranteed” (Walker 1990a: 175, quoted in Kratochwil 1996: 217). The territorial delimitations of political jurisdictions, not only in the Balkans, are thus not best understood as uniform and generic ‘outcomes of modernity’, but as historically specific products of socio-economic conflicts over power and property relations between situated social actors. The constitution and position of these actors are continuously shifting as a result of the dialectical interplay of various contradictions and social pressures.

The following chapter will provide a concise re-statement of the historical reconstruction in relation to a series of historiographic, theoretical and conceptual issues that the Ottoman case has generated. These results will then be confronted with the various attempts within IR theory to conceptualize large-scale change, territorial fragmentation and state-formation. This will reveal that a theorisation that avoids structural (international or domestic) determinisms and grand theorizations as well as causal indeterminacy can be based on the foundations of Political Marxism. Namely,

what is suggested here in lieu of these grand abstractions is a radical historicism of both categories and practices. However, far away from denying the possibility of theory on the whole, this emphasis on the *universal* need for historicisation within historical materialism is itself presented as a *general* reflection and constitutes, therefore, a distinct, independent *theoretical* position. With regards to the specific historical period in question, this also means that a clearer incorporation of ideational elements capable of explaining the emergence of national collective consciousness into the materialist analysis is required as it helps to clarify assumptions about societal multiplicity, coexistence and, as a result, the emergence of various nationalisms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As will be argued, such an elaboration of collective identity could be accommodated within Political Marxism, without fundamentally invalidating any of its major theoretical tenets.

## **7.2 Social Struggles and Ottoman Decline**

This study has shown that the “cracks and fissures” occurring within the Ottoman Empire were not the result of modernization (in the sense of an encompassing rationalisation process), capitalist imperialism or the permeation of the political thought of the Enlightenment, but a long-term consequence of the Ottoman geopolitical predicament in its articulation with intra-Ottoman socio-political forces, leading to the collapse of the traditional centralised Ottoman land-regime and its internally pacifying effects. The territorial fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire does not, therefore, coincide with the modernization of political rule, but has to be understood as a reactionary response from within the Empire to the restoration of Sultanic rule that was trying to superimpose a project of state-modernization on a pre-capitalist social landscape. Secessionist national state-building projects emerged only in response to the Porte’s attempts to restore central power. The re-appropriation of surpluses through tighter fiscal control and the attempt to establish a monopoly over the means of violence led to a series of reactions in the periphery that culminated in a military confrontation in the early 19th century. In the pursuit of this conflict between empire-consolidating and empire-fragmenting forces, Muslim and Christian populations started recognizing each other as ‘foreigners’. Amongst other things, this ultimately led to the unprecedented creation of a territorially defined ‘Greek’ identity.

The analysis of Greek ‘peripheral nationalism’ (Hechter 2000: 74), therefore, confirms parallels to Sandra Halperin’s argument about the “19<sup>th</sup> century European

nation-states [which] inaugurated the rule of the traditional nobility". For her, nationalism was neither a 'liberal' mass movement, nor the project of a rising bourgeoisie, or a professional bureaucratic state-class, but one of the old semi-feudal landed nobility as a reaction "to a growing autonomy of absolutist states and to monarchical attempts to rationalize and liberalize state structures" (Halperin 1997: 53) as a result of geopolitically and socially generated pressures to reform. Equally these findings can be associated with what Charles Tilly called a "statist analysis", locating social transformations in semi-autonomous political changes "that produce governability crises and threats to political power for the ruling elite" (Tilly 1994a: 3). The Ottoman reform movements from Selim III in 1789 via the Tanzimat to the constitutional period and beyond constitute telling examples of this kind of dynamic.

However, the origins of the intensification of this intra-Ottoman socio-political conflict which gained a prominent place in Ottoman/Turkish historiography as a centre-periphery conflict (Mardin 1973a; Heper 1980) are to be found within the wider geopolitical environment of the Ottoman Empire, namely the intensified competition between the Sultan and his Absolutist neighbours. This calls for an approach that is capable of integrating geopolitical conflicts with local social relations without reducing one of them to an outcome of the other. An exclusive emphasis on the modernizing dynamic that is mediated by these geopolitical pressures cannot accommodate the specificities and relatively autonomous dynamics of local, regional and, only in the last instance, 'national' developments. Nor does it explain the social origin of the intensified geopolitical competition itself. Rather than being the result of an almost mechanical process of homogenizing rule into national forms through capitalist, commercial, ideological or military penetration, the new regional interstate system in the Balkans replacing the Sultan's rule over his domains was determined in strong measure by a complex succession and diversity of Ottoman class conflicts and social struggles over the control of the sources of revenue. As Benno Teschke points out:

While the initial impetus towards state modernization and capitalist transformation was [indeed] geopolitical, state [or pre-state, local] responses to this pressure were refracted through respective class relations in '*national*' contexts, including class resistance. (2003: 266)

This statement, however, has to be extended and re-formulated in so far as the management of these pressures, in terms of an imperial response, precipitated 'national' fragmentation.

### **7.3 'Backwardness' and Nationalism**

Assigning causality only to geopolitical processes also overlooks the role of the Sultanate as a center of 'enlightened Absolutism' and bureaucratic reform. Thus, a clear association of national fragmentation with modern IR denies "...the many opportunities available (...) for first theorizing and then evaluating the potential experiments in multiethnic and multireligious coexistence in the social organization of early modern times as alternated models of social and political organisation" (Abou-El-Haj 2005: 63). Chapter 6 has traced the origins of this historiographical distortion in a geopolitically generated persistent discursive practice of Orientalism. Ottoman 'backwardness' is, thus, not explicable in these culturalist terms, for it was precisely the intention to modernize, rather than Orientalist assumptions about social stationariness, that explains the ultimate demise of the last 'Islamic' polity. Representing this Orientalist distortion, Abou-El-Haj rightly criticises Perry Anderson's famous explanation for the decline of the Ottoman Empire in 'The House of Islam' (Anderson 1974 : 361–97) on the grounds that "he reduces Ottoman state and society to a kind of backdrop to the unfolding drama of world history, which in his view is equated with the history of the principal European states" (Abou-El-Haj 2005: 4).

Territorial fragmentation equally neither expresses nor reflects a pre-political existence of primordial 'internal' ethno-linguistic diversity. Diversity has to be understood as an outcome, not a cause, defying the common misperception in IR that, as Ernest Gellner put it, nationalism "determines the norm for the legitimacy of political units" (Gellner 1983: 49). 'Difference' was, as modernist theories of nationalism rightly point out, 'imagined' and politically willed. While this represents an advance over primordialism, social engineering per se can equally not explain diversification without identifying the social background and political motivation for these nation-building projects. One such project was the attempt to engineer a unified Ottoman social identity in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, dubbed 'Ottomanism'. This did not fail because of a lack of 'cohesive power' and ideological appeal of this concept (as opposed to Turkism, Greek nationalism, Arabism, etc.), but because of its

combination with a social struggle. The central government from where it originated had started re-appropriating surpluses and political power to a degree it had not before, thereby antagonizing the peripheral ruling strata, which decided to opt out of the social contract with the Sultanate once the costs outweighed the benefits. Thus, nationalism cannot be understood as a liberal ideology consolidating a revolutionary 'collective agency' of disenfranchised or bourgeois classes rising against the ancient Turkish exploitative regime. The social origins of nationalism, its material foundation, the means of its perpetuation and the conflicts that ensued are all locatable within the Ottoman ruling strata themselves, rather than reflecting political emancipation 'from below' or an emerging 'civil society' (cf. Mardin 1969). This lack of developmental agents also explains why the post-Ottoman national regimes were initially unsuccessful in precipitating a large-scale transformation of the existing social order after gaining full independence from Ottoman rule.

#### **7.4 International Relations, Historical Sociology and the Case of Ottoman Decline**

This brief summary of the key analytical findings of this thesis demonstrates that secessions and processes of disintegration pose a challenge not only to static realist IR theory, but also to theories more conscious of the need to explain change in general and the emergence of nationalism in particular. The modernist contradiction inherent in the eastern question still needs to be resolved. Both capitalism and nationalism entail claims to universality. However, the process of universalization, paradoxically, does not result in what is suggested by their internal 'logics', i.e. a homogenous universal form. Rather, what has come to be accepted as the global 'norm' is functionally similar yet culturally, ethnically and socio-politically heterogeneous nation-states. Globalisation, in turn, is meant to transcend this illogical process of particularization into divided and divisive national polities and economies. However, as both political and economic developments have shown, this process does not produce a world-historical convergence towards a 'borderless' liberal flatland, but continues to generate contradictions, which in turn result in the rearticulation and sometimes further particularization of rule, rather than following the proposed universalising trajectory. This means that the challenge persists and is also relevant in light of more recent examples of secessions which continue to have, through processes of ethnic homogenization, a detrimental impact on human rights as well as

a destabilizing effect on the international order. This is well illustrated by cases such as Kosovo, Ossetia, Abchasia, and East Timor, to name but a few. In short, explaining the transformations in 19<sup>th</sup> century southeastern Europe also has contemporary resonance. The following section will elaborate how the re-interpretation of the eastern question presented here can contribute to rendering the contradiction between the universalizing tendency of modernity and the fragmentation of political rule more intelligible. This question will be dealt with by revisiting the various approaches within historical IR theory introduced in the introduction.

#### **7.4.1 Constructivism**

Having explored the Ottoman trajectory, the constructivist research programme appears to offer great explanatory potential. By focussing on processes of identity formation, while at the same time relating these to wider structural transformations within international relations, constructivism provides promising inroads for understanding Ottoman disintegration. More specifically, chapter 6 has shown that constructivism's emphasis on the relational aspects of national identity formation and the inter-subjective creation of meanings helps comprehending the dynamics not only of the disintegration process, but also of the shifting geopolitical relations of the Ottoman Empire with its European environment. Constructivism is crucial for understanding the dialectical process of Greek and Turkish national identity formation out of a previously unified Ottoman formation. Once established as a dominant discourse, Greek nationalism can be understood as an 'expansive' nationalism, which triggered a Turkish 'reactive' nationalism. These two forms of identity were consequently defined in relation to each other, and gradually received clear territorial expressions that fuel conflicts in the Aegean and Cyprus to this day. But these identities also established further systemic dynamics. Turkism's exclusivist claims, in turn, fuelled emerging conflicts between the Ottoman center and the Arab periphery, which initiated the formation of a coherent form of Pan-Arab nationalism. Greek claims to the regional dominance expressed in the Megali Idea fuelled Slavic and especially the Bulgarian (counter) nationalist movements. Secondly, emphasising the possibility of non-bounded forms of territoriality or social epistemes (Ruggie 1993: 149) is helpful for illuminating other pre-modern forms of collectivities which have played a role in these transformations. In the Ottoman case, many multi-layered forms of social differentiation existed within as well as beyond the Empire, which a realist state-centric analysis cannot accommodate. These sub- and supra-state forms

of collectivities include the community of believers and non-believers, Umma and Dawla, as well as the state-sanctioned faith-based form of social differentiation within the Empire, the Millet system.

However, there are various problems with the constructivist project in light of the Ottoman example. In particular, the history of post-Ottoman Greek state-formation reveals some problems with Ruggie's emphasis on territoriality. The 'package' understanding of modernity, comprising territorial rule, modern political subjectivity and the institution of private property has to be dissected into distinct phases of emergence and subsequent articulation, rather than being understood as three interacting, yet 'autonomous spheres' of modern sovereignty that co-emerge simultaneously (Ruggie 1993: 157). The history of Greek state formation shows that the shift from personal domain to private property relations did not coincide with the establishment of national sovereignty and exclusive territoriality. Equally, this national polity was not territorially consolidated until the end of the Turkish War of Independence in 1923. Thus, territorial secession, the creation of new social epistemes and new forms of political subjectivity predate other forms of modernization. They are historically disjointed phenomena. It appears difficult, therefore, to look for the key to understanding change by 'unbundling territoriality' when territorial transformations neither necessarily represent nor induce social change.

A much more fundamental problem with constructivism is, however, the missing account of the social origin of these inter-subjective meanings and collective identity formations. More to the point, rather than collective identities causing change, they are an outcome of deeper processes of social change. Thus, even if these identities and the differentiation of cultures, ethnicities and races, once constituted and consolidated into coherent national societies, transform the nature of the international system as a whole, as Hall argues (Hall 1999), they cannot explain the transformations that generated them in the first place. Thus, on a conceptual level, constructivism fails to identify the source, or the social engine of the disintegration process that engendered the construction of social meanings, but was not triggered by the differentiation of national identities *per se*. In other words, nationalism-formation is not an autonomous process, but a regionally-refracted derivation of wider geopolitical and social conflicts.

More specifically, in light of the current example, two important material dimensions are absent from the constructivist analysis. Firstly, an emphasis on the role of political violence and its inherent capacity to generate and to mould identities unintentionally is missing. The onslaught of the formidable combined Ottoman/Egyptian forces initiated an unintended process of ‘inter-subjective’ identity formation, which finally resulted in the galvanization of the Greek and other post-Ottoman national communities as they have been naturalized by realist and other mainstream IR approaches.

This raises a second, more crucial point about the limits of constructivism and the absence of social dynamics. In this historical reconstruction, the social change that occurred during the 18<sup>th</sup> century was identified as the crucial element in understanding the process of disintegration and secession. This ‘feudalisation’ of the Ottoman land structure produced a complex and politically unstable class constellation. Out of this constellation developed conflicts both between the periphery and the center, within the Ottoman Empire and, geopolitically, with the Romanov Empire and the European inter-state system in the run-up to the secession of 1821. The origins of Greek identity formation can only be understood within this complex and multi-layered configuration of social geopolitical forces, which are constituted materially and not ideationally.

On the systemic level, constructivism claims that inter-subjectively constituted, shared meanings of anarchy constrain all actors’ behaviour. This could be equated to an institutionalist understanding of the 19<sup>th</sup> century international system. Ideational and formalised structures were reflected in the post-Napoleonic Vienna Concert, which established rules and norms. On a less formalized level, the balance of power system can be understood as an agent-constituted and constraining structure which generates a form of order. However, far from establishing the era of peace and stability Paul Schroeder celebrates (Schroeder 1983), Russian designs on the Balkans and towards the Ottoman Empire were not fundamentally altered, but merely upheld as the outbreak of the Crimean War demonstrates. If ideational structures had been successful in constraining aggression, the very material British interventions in the Greek War of Independence, motivated first and foremost by the desire to balance Russian influence, would have been unnecessary. The balance of power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the degree that it was operational, was physically enforced and not merely immaterially and normatively maintained.



To sum this up: From the historical analysis presented here, it is not clear where ideational factors enter the material analysis in a *constitutive* way. This is not to say that ideational factors do not play a role in the transformation. In terms of a causal hierarchy, however, they are clearly subordinated to the material factors that led to the break-up of the Ottoman Empire. Inter-subjectively constructed identities and structures have to be understood as an *outcome* of materially conditioned social struggles within a wider context of geopolitical encounters.

#### **7.4.2 Neo-Weberian Historical Sociology**

If looked at superficially, the findings of this research project could suggest that the relevance of geopolitical competition for analysing the social transformations that led to Ottoman decline could hardly be overstated. On the systemic level, a constant and almost uninterrupted geopolitical rivalry can be discerned historically. Realists could read this as a form of structural determination of social transformations. Military competition, therefore, appears to be an immutable, constant and essentialized part of the nature of Ottoman foreign relations, generated by the mere fact of coexistence with the Romanov Empire within an unchanging and unchangeable physical environment constituted first and foremost by the Straits Question. Sultan and Tsar stand in natural competition towards one another in their pursuit for resources and survival guaranteed by the control of physical space, in this case around the shores of the Black Sea. While these conflicts became more regulated with the consolidation of these societies into modern national territorial states, competition remains, in this paradigm, a timeless reality, continued by the Republican and Soviet successor states independently of the radically altered internal constitutions. Thus, geopolitical competition was omnipresent and forced the previously stable social structures of the Ottoman Empire to change in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. With increased military pressure, exercised mostly by the equally pre-modern 'Empires' of Austria and Russia (Venice earlier), from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the Ottoman Empire shifts from a position of territorial stagnation to recession after the failed siege of Vienna 1683, when the first territorial losses in the Balkans were internationally sanctioned by the Peace Treaties of Karlowitz 1699 and Passarovitz 1718. Thus, the result of increased geopolitical pressure was indeed — as neo-Weberian historical sociology predicts — an attempt to consolidate political power in the center through the creation of a salaried, modern standing army, an impersonal bureaucracy and a sound fiscal basis necessary to fund it. Furthermore, it was by means of emulation of Europe that

the Ottoman state started introducing a new army, or *Nizam-i-Cedid*, under Selim III. The previously patrimonial bureaucracy approximated the Weberian, rational ideal type and became one of the central agents of modernization (Findley 1980a). Indeed, it is precisely these institutional innovations that were started in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century that can explain why the successor state of the Ottoman Empire emerged as arguably the geopolitically most successful and formidable ‘unit’ from the selection process in the Balkans and the Middle East. Most post-Ottoman nation-states, from Bosnia-Herzegovina down to the Emirate of Kuwait, have suffered many external and internal, sometimes life-threatening challenges. The Republic of Turkey (i.e. the original locus of modernization and institutional innovation in the region), on the other hand, has retained territorial integrity and enjoyed relative political stability and prosperity ever since its foundation in 1923.

However, despite these various convincing aspects, there are, as with Constructivism, conceptual problems. On the social level, Neo-Weberians assume passive and identical institutional responses to geopolitical pressures from national bureaucracies everywhere. Here, the modernizing agents did not emerge from aspiring national states, but evolved from within the imperial administration itself. Like the Ottoman Empire, the newly founded national states remained coercion-intensive as they did not radically alter the mode of revenue extraction, but continued the long and protracted period of transition started under Ottoman rule towards ‘modern’ sovereignty. The feudal mode was above all entrenched in the social forces that opposed imperial, ‘rational’ consolidation. And yet, with international help, the theoretically weaker (in Tilly’s sense), feudal regime of the Greek primates persisted geopolitically. It was the Ottoman imperial modernizing agency that created an escalating conflict with the peripheral/feudal ‘lords’. This conflict was not ‘won’ outright by the ‘rational modernizers’, whose efforts culminated in the Tanzimat, the Young Turk revolution and Kemalist state formation. Thus, it is the social struggle over the sources of revenue, i.e. a *social process* rather than one or many modernization agendas alone, that explain the emergence of a multitude of states in southeastern Europe.

Theoretically, the neo-Weberian approach cannot account for these transformations. This is because it discounts ‘non-rational’ outcomes of social struggles as ‘setbacks’ instead of stepping stones in a non-linear process. Modernization did not lead to the consolidation of rule, but to the opposite, i.e. to a

process of disintegration. Institutional innovations undertaken by the Sublime Porte prior to Kemalism did not create ‘competitiveness’ but social contradictions, which eventually led to secessions. Geopolitically, on the other hand, the Ottoman Empire remained uncompetitive *despite* various wide-ranging military reforms. While it could be argued that the process of decline from 1683 to 1923 should be understood as a protracted form of ‘outselection’, leaving a formidable national state, the Republic of Turkey as the survivor, it would be highly problematic to force 240 years of non-linear social developments into such a unidirectional narrative of decline.

Secondly, there appears to be a problem with the Neo-Weberian explanation of national, ethnic and linguistic differentiation. Internal national homogenization and, by extension, external differentiation, are explained as necessities of ‘rational’ state-building. Even though this is never made explicit, Neo-Weberian historical sociology appears to rely on an implicit primordial understanding of ethnic differentiation which becomes politicised only in the modern nation-state. Applying an essentialized notion of differentiation implies an unawareness of the various attempts to de-essentialize race, ethnicity and nation-formation which reveal the political and social origin and cognitive nature (Malik 1996; Brubaker, Loveman et al. 2002), rather than natural and biological essence of these concepts (Smith 1992). However, if differentiation of territorial rule does not reflect an underlying biological or *a priori* difference, then an explanation for the rational ‘logic’ of differentiation itself is missing. Secondly, given this socially constructed nature of ethnicity, the process of ethnic homogenization is never finite but circular, which prevents the establishment of a stable political order. The history of homogenization is not only one of internal ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity committed by secessionist and centralizing forces alike. It is also a history of international instability and breakdown of ‘order’, as the ‘Powder Keg’ characterization of the Balkans illustrates.<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, the nature of military competition needs to be historicised and contextualized. Despite the fact that Ottoman/Russian coexistence was highly conflictual in nature, this was not owed to a transhistorical law of human coexistence,

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<sup>100</sup> The atrocities committed during the Greek War of Independence and the Armenian Genocide confirm the relevance of these findings for the Ottoman case (Bloxham 2005; Mann 2005: Ch 5 and 6) More recently, atrocities committed against the Serb Civilian population by the supposed liberators, the Kosovan Liberation Army, in 1999 further illustrate this point. The extent of war crimes committed against Serbs, including organ theft, was recently documented by the former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Carla Del Ponte, see: Del Ponte and Sudetic (2008).

but to historically specific underlying social conditions, namely the necessity of 'political accumulation' confined by the limits of production performance of pre-capitalist social property relations. In other words, a mere reference to competition does not explain the origins of Romanov expansion which originated in the unique Russian reproductive strategies developed by Catherine the Great. It appears, nevertheless, unjustified to label the geopolitical conflicts that contributed to the break-up of the Ottoman land regime as a structural condition of international relations when its origins are socially specific. The particular origins of Russian expansionism combined with the unique physical geography of the Black Sea and the Straits cannot be generalized. There was no natural or inherent drive of Russian elites trying to project their 'will to power' as classical Realism would have it. Equally, it was not the anarchical structure of modern IR that forced them to seek expansion. Rather, it was their colonization of the Ukrainian steppe driven by geopolitical accumulation that led to a situation whereby the Russian geo-strategic location made access to the Mediterranean indispensable for further social reproduction, in this case based on an imperative to export newly cultivated crops. Hence, the prospect of realizing profits on the world market directed Russian practices. However, this in turn was driven by Russia's own social crisis and the Romanov's need to raise levels of revenue – something that sprang out of their own geopolitical predicaments. Thus, the only 'structural determination' that continues to dominate geopolitical relations in the region was its physical geography. At the core of these geographic structures were the Straits as the sole access route to warm water ports. It is this aspect of the geography and topography of the region, rather than Russian 'Orthodox' sympathies, Pan-Slavism or outright imperialism which made the Straits, and with it their Ottoman gatekeepers, the contested area that it was up until the end of the Soviet Union. The Ottoman/Russian competition was, therefore, not generated by a natural drive for power-projection, but by the geopolitical configuration around the Black Sea. Yet, even this expansionism was neither static nor perennial as instances of Russo-Ottoman cooperation such as the 1833 Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi illustrate. Russian motivations also differed in origin and nature from the competing expansions of the Venetians and Habsburgs, which equally contributed to the Ottoman Empire's weakness. However, none of the competitors involved were, in Neo-Weberian parlance, national 'efficient' or 'capital-intensive' states, but largely remained 'inefficient Empires'. The most advanced state, Britain, was concerned with the preservation of Ottoman rule, and, save the Greek War of Independence, had no

designs for outright Ottoman dismemberment until the Sultan's fateful decision to join the Central Powers (Kent 1996: 166, 176).

### **7.4.3 World Systems Theory**

As with geopolitical competition, it is difficult to deny the impact of the global economic transformations inherent in World Systems Theory on the Ottoman society. This is also reflected in the wide reception the World Systems approach has received in Turkish historiography and sociology. In fact, various changes in the world market put the Ottoman economy at a comparative disadvantage and thereby contributed to the fiscal crisis that changed the Ottoman land regime and that, in turn, harmed the Sultan's military prowess. Namely, the exposure to competition from the New World and the influx of American silver caused inflation and triggered the economic, fiscal and social crisis (Barkan and McCarthy 1975; Cizakca 1980; Pamuk 2001). Equally, the Ottoman textile industry was negatively affected by the import of British production into a previously enclosed Ottoman market. Apart from these wider world economic factors that contributed to Ottoman economic weakness and, by extension, political instability, there are two more specific ways in which the expansion of the world economy induced the process of disintegration. The most obvious one is the emergence of a trans-national Christian merchant class. Members of this class conspired with 'Greek' notables in Russian service to launch the Filiki Etaria which coincided with a decline in grain prices in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century after the end of the Napoleonic disruptions had revived pre-war levels of production in Europe. This in turn contributed to the socio-economic malaise on the Peloponnese where the agricultural economy had previously benefited from easy access to the war-torn and unproductive European markets. This decline in income impacted on a society where the struggle over surpluses was already fierce. Combined with the Etarist's nationalist agenda, discontent peasants, military men and notables gradually converged into an anti-Ottoman coalition.

However, this latter example is equally well suited to illustrate a problem with the World Systems argument. While it is beyond doubt that these economic factors contributed to Ottoman decline, it is difficult to see how they could enter the analysis independent of the specific class configurations they ultimately claim to alter. In other words, the impact of market inequalities is dependent on the social formations they are impacting on. More to the point, national secession did not alter these fundamental inequalities and the new Greek state was dependent on loaned money

from the City of London, the repayment of which restricted Greek agency just as much as financial dependency restricted Ottoman agency. The Ottoman fiscal-financial crisis only developed into a major factor once the global economic recession was thoroughly felt throughout the region in the 1870s.

Another problem regarding the World Systems analysis concerns the agency of transnational merchants. Rather than Greekness being the outcome of bourgeois identity formation, it is probably fair to say that the kind of Greek nationalism that involved a territorial dimension had no clear social origin and ‘Greekness’ only gradually developed into a territorial concept through inimical, violent encounters with recognizable enemies (Triandafyllidou and Paraskevopoulou 2002; Triandafyllidou 2005). Moreover, the territorial project generated by the discontent of a second tier of the Greek merchant community based in Odessa threatened the livelihoods of the wealthiest parts of the transnational Greek merchant community as it would (and eventually did) destroy the previously unified Ottoman market. In particular, the Greek elites of Istanbul were either indifferent or in strong opposition to the conflict evolving in the Morea.

As for the establishment of the rule of law and secure property titles, these were not introduced until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in either modern Greece or the Ottoman Empire. Greek as well as Turkish state formation resembled each other in that territorial secession and consolidation did not imply a radical social transformation as seen in the Iranian or Chinese cases. As was the case with the formation of republican Turkey, “the structure of society, the rules of property, the pattern of class relations, remained unaltered” during the Greek secession (Anderson 2008). It should be added at this point, that this lack of social transformation is more widely acknowledged for the Turkish Kemalist state than it is for the Greek state.

It is highly problematic, therefore, to argue that secession was institutionally necessary for world-market mediated capitalist development, or conducive to the incorporation of the Ottoman lands into the pre-configured political superstructures of the world economy. Understanding social change as determined by the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into an emerging world economy, i.e. as the result of externally imposed capitalist development which spreads in the form of bourgeois revolutions cannot account for the complexity of the social struggles underlying the transformation (cf. Teschke 2005). Furthermore, this argument cannot account for the pre-capitalist nature of the Greek struggle.

#### 7.4.4 Uneven and Combined Development

The social transformations in the Ottoman Empire between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries are only intelligible when considered within their geopolitical and world-economic contexts. Thus, both geopolitical as well as global economic transformations are important causal factors for explaining this transformation. However, it appears that the two most pertinent approaches in the Historical Sociology of International Relations, the Neo-Weberian competition model and World Systems Theory operate with limited and reified ontologies of 'the international'. On the one hand, this exclusive emphasis on the geopolitical and the world economic respectively constitutes a problematic limitation preventing a fruitful theoretical synthesis. On the other hand, this problem derives from an a priori, rather than sociological derivation of the respective concepts of 'the international'.

In developing this concept sociologically, the theory of uneven and combined development (U&CD) claims to overcome these shortcomings. Applied to the Ottoman case, U&CD argues that the historical transformation that led to the emergence of a new international system in southeastern Europe commenced with the uneven development of the Ottoman Empire as compared to its Austrian and Russian neighbours. Inter-action with these – relatively speaking – more advanced societies led to the changes in the Ottoman land regime and the institutional innovations described in chapter 3. The struggle between a feudalising land regime and an Ottoman centralizing bureaucracy, which started to emulate institutions from its external environment, can be understood as a process of 'combination'. Finally, the social contradictions this process of 'combination' produced, led to further social struggles eventually culminating in societal differentiation and the territorialization of this conflict during the Greek secession of 1821. This set in motion a new *international* dynamic, the preliminary, but by no means final, outcome of which was the formation of modern Turkey *in opposition* to the new Greek expansionism (Özkirimli and Sofos 2008). The cycle of uneven and combined development is complete. Societal differentiation, reflecting uneven development, has, through interaction, generated further international dynamics that combine with existing social structures, propelling social change elsewhere. In light of the Ottoman example some problems with the theory of uneven and combined development nevertheless arise. This concerns the historical concretisation of its two central analytical categories, 'society' and the 'inter-societal' as well as the inscribed notions of 'inter-action' and 'combination'.

### *Problematizing the Social*

As the concept of the 'inter-societal' relies on an ontological clarity about the delineations of the 'social', this should be problematized first. The process of Ottoman disintegration constitutes but one example illustrating that this is far from clear in the pre-modern world, if it is in the modern world. The constitution of 'unevenness' and the definition of pre-territorial 'boundaries' of 'the social' remain unclear even within the established inter-nation-state system of contemporary southeastern Europe. In the case of the late Ottoman world, the much debated conceptual distinction between 'state', 'nation' and 'society' is reflected in a complex web of identities, which, like in the case of the Greek exile merchants or the Umma and Dawla concepts of a dualistic worldview are entirely non-territorial in nature. This is not to argue that it suffices to replace territorial societal forms with transnational ones. 'Greekness' itself was a contested concept, which was only partly reflected in the contradictory visions of the Greek Enlightenment (Veremis 1990; Carras 2004). The various pre-territorial attempts to craft collective identities, from 'Greekness' over Pan-Slavism to Turkism did not necessarily create uniform forms of consciousness. Examples like the role of the 'Greek' nobles in Russian service, the Orthodox clergy on the Sultan's payroll and the Albanian 'Muslim Bonaparte', Ali Pasha, who took up arms against 'his' Caliph, are all indicative of the fact that the definition of the social as 'society', and by extension the 'inter-societal' as a distinct realm of 'inter'-action are problematic if applied to the current example.

In general, relations of personal dependence were not necessarily the rule. The allegiance of freely roaming peasants and bandits within the Morea shifted constantly according to casual opportunities to generate income in various ways. At the beginning of the struggle some joined the Ottoman army, some joined Ali Pasha's forces while others preferred to organize themselves. Other forms of income generation were found in pastoral reproduction in remote geographical, mountainous areas, plundering Christian and Muslim villages alike. At sea, piracy became a common mode of subsistence on many Aegean islands. Warlords, including the Sultan himself, and merchants offered many pre-capitalist forms of employment. This non-territorial and de-personal and yet pre-capitalist form of subsistence calls into question the idea of identifiable stable pre-capitalist social relations or even whole societies. Yet it was, above all, these freely roaming, un-socialized peasants who constituted the backbone of the Revolt as 'brigands without a cause'. This goes to



show that identities were always overlapping and changing and are not sufficiently explained by relations of personal dependence and kinship in the pre-capitalist era.

In more abstract terms, this shows that U&CD builds on sociological categories derived from 19<sup>th</sup> century Western Europe without taking into account the historically specific constitution of these categories. This recognition is not least important since the institutionalisation of the study of bounded societies within 19<sup>th</sup> century academia served a specific *national* socio-political purpose. Equally, national, homogenised societies are themselves the result of violent (geo)political processes specific to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, rather than a passive structure within which these processes occur.

### *Problematizing the 'Inter-National'*

To these problematic sociological categories, U&CD now adds, as a derivative, the 'inter-national'. In the specific setting of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Balkans, one concrete appearance of 'the international' would be the Vienna inter-state system, which chapter 4 has shown to have had a significant role for the transformations in question. However, there are various significant social actors and, by extension, historical developments that sociologically constitute 'the international', the concept of 'unevenness' cannot capture because they escape a clear inside/outside bifurcation, even if understood in non-territorial terms. Specifically, the centrality of provincial relations in the history of Ottoman decline does not fit this clear dichotomy. However, pointing out these complexities does not imply that it suffices to simply add another layer of 'the provincial' and to replace a binary ontology with a triad model of interaction as all social relations are historically conditioned and therefore constantly shifting. The central Ottoman administration had relations with Europe and Russia as well as with the various provincial magnates and power-holders. The transnational appeal of Pan-Slavism and the variable role of Orthodox Christianity 'combine' with each other on various levels and not just via an inside/outside dialectic. This process of 'combination', moreover, does not necessarily further 'development', but sometimes produces more backward formations, or indeed does not lead to meaningful social change at all.

Another question pertains to the impact of a new inter-national post-Ottoman order in the region. Did the further differentiation change the rules of the game in the sense that, what used to be 'social relations', had now become 'inter-societal relations'? In fact, the aftermath of the Greek secession did have long-term effects on

the whole region from the Bulgarian to Turkish state formations with some questions, such as the Macedonian, unsettled to this day. Hence, even the new inter-national order in the Balkans begs the question as to whether new kinds of interactions can be logically derived from the fact of 'co-existence'. As a matter of fact, the emergence of an inter-state system created new dynamics. Even though old social conflicts residual already within the Ottoman Empire were re-formulated within the new spatial layout of the region, the emergence of inter-nation-state relations did change the rules of the game. The significance of this reformulation into various nation-states lies in the geopolitical situation that followed which has been aptly described as a 'Powder Keg'. This juncture, thus, gave rise to a quasi-realist geopolitical dynamic which continues to be fuelled by reciprocally reinforcing state-forming wars. This means, however, that a clearly identifiable notion of the international and a realist ontology become applicable only once inter-societal relations are containerized within modern, territorially bounded nation-states. Specific forms of inter-action, such as 'society' and 'the international', therefore form historically specific categories that cannot be derived from the presumed 'facts' of 'multiplicity' and 'co-existence'.

#### *Social Change as Moments of Combination*

What the historical reconstruction has demonstrated is the importance of the *process* of differentiation, as opposed to an a priori assumption about difference. The challenge this thesis tried to meet was an explanation for the concrete historical processes of societal division that occurred between 1821 and 1923. It was shown how a political, violent and competitive process created mutually exclusive as well as constitutive narratives of 'self' and 'other' out of the Ottoman social whole. This is not to say that uneven development does not constitute *a* form of differentiation, but simply that it does not constitute *the only* form. Here the role of social and political struggles is crucial. Indeed, one major channel of these struggles was violence and war. Only with the arrival of a modernizing Ottoman and an effectively modernized Egyptian army, does the conflict generate two clearly delineated, ethnically homogenous and territorially bounded 'societies'. Thus, while uneven development has contributed to producing the contradictions that ultimately led to the outbreak of the conflict, it is not unevenness per se, but the process of 'combination' that generates further differentiation. This crucial moment of 'combination' escapes abstraction and can only be revealed through concrete historical enquiries. In the Ottoman case, 'combination' is violent since the introduction of modern warfare by

the French-trained Egyptian army is a crucial factor that explains the emergence of unprecedented radicalized identities and ethnic divisions. This goes to show that social delimitations and, by extension, the international, are politically constituted categories, which are not only a reflection of ‘unevenness’ but which are politically willed and socially engineered processes of differentiation.

By way of conclusion, it can be argued that the theory of U&CD does shed light on one certain, important aspect of inter-action between ‘backward’ elites and, broadly speaking, the ‘whip of external necessity’. While important, this cannot replace the need for a holistic explanation of Ottoman decline, such as the one presented here. U&CD helps comprehending the emergence of an Ottoman modernization movement, while neglecting at least one other central aspect of the transformation, notably national secessions and nation-formation. Moreover, as U&CD relies heavily on ‘the inter-national’ as a master-category explaining transformations *everywhere*, it seems that the very processes constituting these ontologies historically would need to be formulated on the level of *theory*, rather than left to concrete historicisations. In other words, nation-formation needs to be built into the *abstraction*, not least since U&CD in fact “lacks any tools for specifying the causal properties of those processes of social life to whose multiplicity and interaction it draws attention” (Callinicos and Rosenberg 2008: 86). It can be argued therefore that U&CD, at the level of abstraction where it is articulated as a ‘theory’, holds little explanatory guidance for any concrete investigation like the one presented here while ascribing a transhistoricity to its central categories they arguably do not possess (cf. Davidson 2009: 17f).

In relation to the present study, this means that the use of certain generic terms, such as ‘the geopolitical’ or ‘the social’, has to be seen as a shorthand for a historically specific semantics that refuses to operate with these categories as ‘modernist real-abstractions’. Thus, geopolitics is understood here as the variable politics of organising space by historically situated actors which cannot be reduced to a perennial ‘inter-societal/communal’, while it also stresses the agential politics of these geo-processes that cannot be mechanically derived from the structural imperatives or constraints of a transhistorical notion of the ‘inter-national’. Defined in such terms, it has been shown in the present case that geopolitics is shaped by the actions and practices of *individual, personalized* ruling dynasties more than

‘societies’ or ‘states’ in a modernist, *collective* sense.<sup>101</sup> In this way, a historicised notion of the geopolitical is upheld, while avoiding its limitation to a realm of ‘interaction’ between ‘Russia’, ‘Austria’ and an Ottoman ‘society’. In other words, the Ottoman experience suggests that it is much more useful to unlock these methodological constraints and to start from an assumption about all social actors as multidimensional and complex. This, then, equally applies to the other categories in which the theory of uneven and combined development operates, i.e. ‘society’, ‘interaction’, ‘unevenness’, ‘backwardness’, ‘development’, and ‘combination’, all of which require careful historicization before being employed as analytical tools.

#### **7.4.5 Political Marxism**

One re-emerging criticism of uneven and combined development is, therefore, that its underlying ontology is in fact based on the history of European capitalist modernity, which rules out its universal or transhistorical application (Ashman 2009; Davidson 2009). One answer to this can be found in Political Marxism’s emphasis on the historical specificity of socio-economic conflicts. The intelligible, yet unpredictable and unintended outcomes of these conflicts generate historically and regionally specific – politically constituted – appearances of ‘the social’ and geopolitics. This should not be understood, however, as leaving the explanation to historical contingency. Political Marxism simply builds on the notion of specific, materially conditioned social struggles and privileges, thereby privileging agency over structure. As stated earlier, this turn towards historical specificity suggested here should equally not be read as a flight into historiography, but as a *theoretical* position that stresses the historicity of the very *theoretical categories* deployed to analyse specific instances of historical concretion and a corresponding aversion against the temptations of grand theorizing.

What is proposed here is a more simplified dialectical understanding of social change (Heine and Teschke 1996). This still allows for an understanding of local struggles within specific geopolitical settings, which are, however, themselves constituted by specific social relations and struggles. This is illustrated by the post-Napoleonic Vienna system of states and the various ways in which it moulded the specific center-periphery conflict within the Ottoman Empire. This emphasis on the

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<sup>101</sup> This should not be read as a replacement of the ‘inter-national’ by the ‘inter-dynastic’, but as a reminder that geopolitics is constituted by a variety of historically and regionally specific social actors engaging in a variety of practices. Defining this realm merely in terms of ‘inter-societal’ ‘inter-actions’ obscures precisely those specificities that can account for the variation in outcomes.

dialectical and historical nature of social change and geopolitics offers an escape route from various forms of geopolitical or economistic international determinisms.

This also means that the relationship between nationalism, territorial sovereignty and capitalist development cannot be subsumed under one totalizing meta-narrative of 'modernity'. Post-Ottoman state formation demonstrates that the identification of a plurality of states with effective capitalist or other forms of modernization cannot be sustained. Capitalism, as a way of determining social relations, does not require or presuppose the 'national' organization of individual societies or the interstate system, even though it might be intrinsically compatible with it (cf. Rosenberg 1994). Contrary to the view of a 'structural' or 'logical' link between capitalism and the nation-state, Hannes Lacher and Benno Teschke argue that 'the inter-stateness of capitalist political space cannot be explained by reference to the nature of capitalism or the "laws" or "logic" of capital' (eg Lacher 2002: 148; Teschke and Lacher 2007). While this argument is in principle supported by the findings of the preceding historical enquiry, it does not explain the origins of the distinctive national form of territorial rule.

However if the disintegration of a so-called multinational Empire is not owed to the appearance of a specifically capitalist or modern way of ordering political rule along 'national' lines, this also means that the Ottoman Empire was not the big anomaly or the 'Islamic Alien' setting camp in southeastern Europe, as the Orientalist tradition would have it. While the Ottoman's historical nomadic origins do lie in a tradition of geopolitical accumulation (Teschke 2003: 95f ), the same is true for most European dynastic states. For both, the Ottoman, as well as the European states, this nevertheless remained a historically specific strategy of reproduction which did not survive into 'modern' territorial interstate relations. The Ottoman Empire entered a process of territorial consolidation which was codified in the 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz. This set in motion a process of far-reaching socio-economic as well as institutional adaptations so that at the time of the secessions, Sultanic power was comparable to the enlightened Absolutist contemporary dynasts in Europe.

Conversely, neither does the emergence of 'national' sovereignty indicate the depersonalization of political rule. Exploitation was still carried out through extra-economic means and political relations remained highly personalized through patronage and clientelism within the new national polity. This is not to say, however,

that theories of nationalism are inadequately portraying the historical uniqueness of nationalism as a distinctive form of political and social organization. Nationalism eventually constitutes distinct, mutually exclusive, social formations and, by extension, creates the anarchical and geopolitical conditions of modern international relations. Neither modernity nor capitalism, however, can serve as an explanation for the initial emergence of a multiplicity of nationalisms (Lacher 2005; Teschke 2005; Teschke and Lacher 2007). It is thus the premodern social origins of the post-Ottoman nationalisms that are capable of illustrating that the prevailing modernist-Marxist ‘capitalist reductionism’ as an explanation for the specifically national character of state-formation needs to be reconsidered. The historical specificity and social complexity of the emergence of these national movements, which were deeply entrenched in the various premodern and pre-capitalist social constellations and conflicts, do not lend themselves to notions of an automatized universalization of Western models of popular or national sovereignty. Equally, this process did not occur in isolation and according to strictly ‘internal’ dynamics. However, it is to say that national insurrection is not intelligible without developing an understanding of “the determinate long-term consequence of centuries of social conflicts over rights of domination and appropriation over land and people amongst pre-capitalist classes” within the Ottoman lands (Teschke and Lacher 2007: 570). It is important at the same time to avoid a replacement of an unreflected modernist functionalism with a primordial essentialism (Smith 1991). As Ray Kiely put it:

“Recognizing difference here should not be confused with an uncritical celebration of cultural particularism, or what often amounts to the universal indifference of difference. Rather, it is based on the recognition — denied above all by Hardt and Negri [2000] — that capitalism has not ‘created a world after its own image’ (Kiely 2005: 48).

As this historical reconstruction of Ottoman decline has shown, fragmentation of rule is best understood as a specific, but materially driven process. This material element is constituted by locally situated class conflicts over sources of revenue. Within this dynamic there are two important aspects that need to be added to a historical materialist analysis in order to understand the process of national fragmentation in the Ottoman case. On the one hand, these conflicts, once they enter into a stage of mass violence, create collective identities that are reflected by the respective political subjects themselves as well as by their international environment. In turn, these emerging structures establish both material and ideational structures. These understandings of nationalism(s) are present in realist and constructivist

analysis respectively. Once constituted as an outcome of social struggles, nations are to this day reified and, in this sense, do amount to a socially generated normative structure through which inter-state relations are usually channelled.

Without taking into consideration the socio-economic and geopolitical origins of these structures that Political Marxism emphasises, they cannot be made intelligible. Ideational ‘forces’ in and of themselves, can neither explain the Ottoman center-periphery conflict, nor the military campaigns, both within the Ottoman Empire as well as between the Sultan, the Tsar and the European Great Powers. In other words, it was not just a simple ‘transplant’ of modernity, but complex and multi-layered social conflicts that led to the very gradual and interrupted transfer of European models of sovereignty to southeastern Europe. This is not only of historiographical or conceptual relevance. It also helps emphasizing that political violence does not necessarily create order (cf. Kalyvas, Masoud et al. 2008). Rather, ‘nations’ and the contemporary inter-national geopolitical layout do not represent a ‘natural’ or finite order of things, but are subject to change by the very social forces that created them in the first place.

### **7.5 Towards an Identity Agenda in Historical Materialism**

While due care needs to be taken to avoid an essentialization or overdetermination of the concept of geopolitics, as the current research has confirmed, this does not deny its importance for a meaningful historical sociological analysis. However, it has also shown the historicity of the concept of society itself, which means that any formulation of ‘the inter-societal’ as a generic ontology is problematic for it is a derivation of a transhistorical understanding of the social as (national) society. Instead, geopolitics is a historically contingent category, the definition of which always depends on changes in the social make-up and practices of its ‘constitutive’ parts, be they classes, religious groups or, indeed, national states.

Furthermore, the historical reconstruction of Ottoman decline presented here has shown that a strict delimitation of the ideational from the material as practiced by mainstream International Relations Theory is problematic. The biggest challenge continues to be the development of an explanation that avoids two recurring problems. One is the subordination of a variety of social forms, such as the nation or territoriality to a grand totalizing narrative of the expansion of European capitalist

modernity. On the other hand, an epistemological arbitrariness, which enters a variety of factors into the analysis without clarifying any form of causal hierarchy, such as Michael Mann's IMEP model, appears just as difficult to implement historically. Material and ideational factors are both relevant, but are not simply 'co-constitutive', or inter-related. Rather than making generic statements about either the relevance of a variety of factors, or the exclusive preference of one factor over another, this historical reconstruction constitutes an attempt to reconcile the material with the ideational by emphasizing specific material class configurations as the origin of struggles. These eventually determine the nature of ideational, and ultimately, international, structures, through which further struggles are geopolitically mediated. This is not only important for explaining the emergence of multiple nationalisms or 'difference' more generically. Introducing the ideational as a materially determined, yet nevertheless socially relevant category, can also contribute to developing historically more sensitive notions of geopolitics that escape the trap of operating a static inside/outside ontology (cf. Walker 1993).

The ideational element underlying the study of international relations is 'the national' as the contemporary, fragmented, form of 'the social'. While Political Marxism provides the most promising opening towards understanding the various dialectical social struggles that led to the specific territorial configuration of the post-Ottoman world, it is not without shortcomings with regards to explaining the social origin and role of the national character of territorial sovereignty. Considering the process of collective identity formation in pre-capitalist societies within a broad historical materialist understanding of social transformation is essential for explaining multiplicity. Frederick Dufour's work represents a major step forward in this direction (Dufour 2007). While his recent intervention did provide some valuable theoretical and historical advances on how to reconcile the study of nationalism with Political Marxism, it was demonstrated that the relationship between nationalism and modern sovereignty needs to be understood even beyond the context of social property relations and uneven capitalist development. In contrast, it was argued here, that the origin of collective identities that came to be reflected historiographically as 'nations' have various and specific origins which cannot be attributed to a single 'modern' or 'capitalist' homogenizing force. Thus, a reconciliation of historical materialism with a non-statist, non-static and de-essentialized, but historical understanding of the social that acknowledges the malleability both of the abstract



nature as well as the specific historical content of collectivities, should constitute the natural building block of a theory of the inter-national.

Proposed here, instead of a futile quest for a new grand narrative of nation-formation, is a historicisation of the specific social struggles that led to different manifestations of ‘the national’. Within these historically specific processes of identity formation, the effects of mass violence and total war can play a central role. Without falling back into a Neo-Weberian trap of geopolitical (over)determinism, this concerns the constitutive role of war and geopolitics. Adding the social effects of mass violence to the study of the material origins of social transformations can improve the understanding of the post-Ottoman trajectories which continue to leave their mark on contemporary international politics. Social differentiation is understood here as a specific rather than a natural outcome. However, succinctly pointing to the origin of a social dynamic in the material world does not prohibit a reflection on the ideational outcomes of this transformation or prevent claims about the future social relevance of these structures. Indeed, because they constitute the central categories of IR, the ideational outcomes in the form of multiple collective identities are crucial beyond the post-Ottoman context. Theories of nationalism have, usefully, pointed out that this ‘inside’ was ‘nationalized’ only relatively recently. However, as Miroslav Hroch’s apt critique of modernist theories of nationalism has revealed, it was equally not a path-dependent process in tune with a large-scale project of teleological modernization, but the result of specific social struggles.

## **7.6 Conclusion: The Infinity of the Eastern Question**

In a similar vein, it is argued here that the emergence of the geopolitical system in southeastern Europe is best understood as the outcome of dialectical social struggles. However, as the establishment of the inter-national ‘order’ has not resolved the material/ideational, international/social and particular/universal contradictions, the eastern question(s) – historiographically, (geo)politically and conceptually – remain unanswered and continue to pose “the double challenge - to produce a sociology at once historical *and* international” (Halliday 2002: 245). The historical reconstruction of the process of Ottoman decline presented here confirms that these historical and social specificities are reconcilable with a historical materialist approach that incorporates historicised concepts of geopolitics. It has also shown, furthermore, that

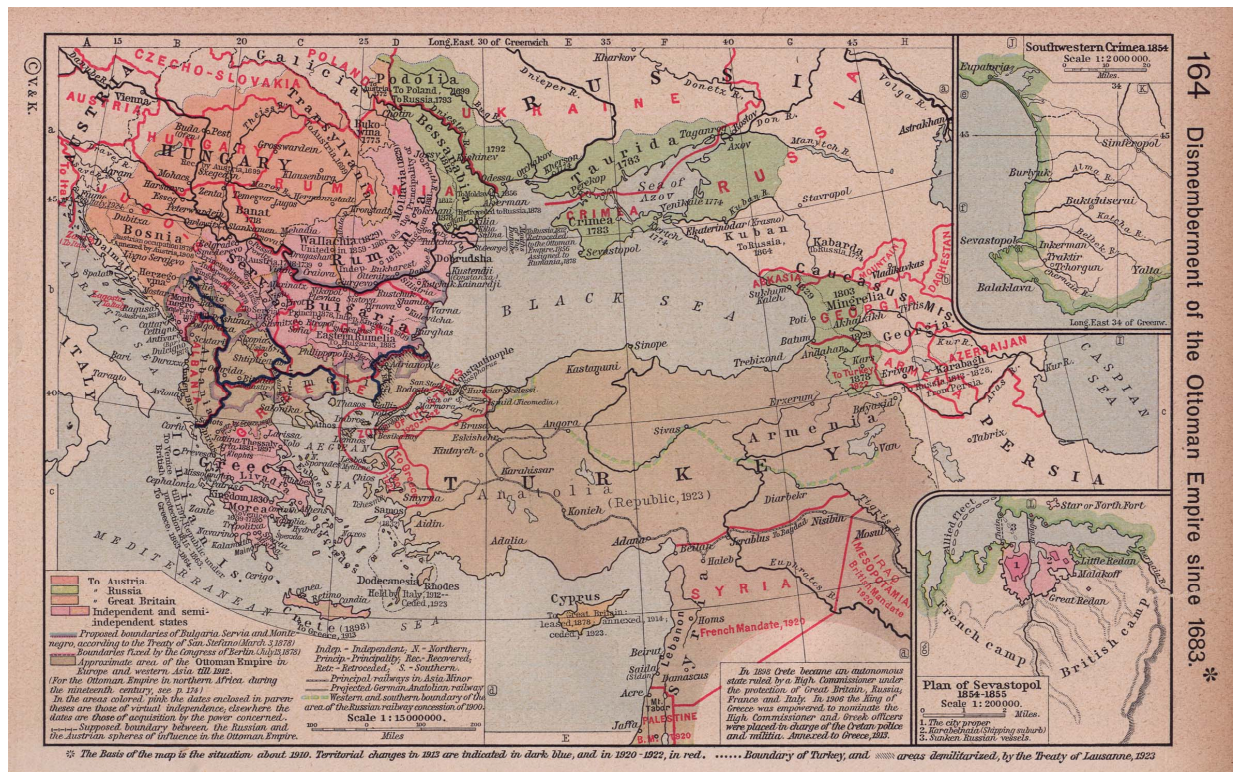
nation-formation is best understood as an open-ended historical *process*. The continuing intra-Ottoman social struggles after the Greek secession led to more ‘tormented births’ (Al-Khafaji 2004) of national states in the Balkans, the emergence of a variety of Arab nation-states, imperialist penetration and the Armenian genocide. However, this is a continuous process as was confirmed by the 2008 creation of an independent Kosovo, the continuing prevalence of the Kurdish question in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, the persistent division, despite some progress, of Cyprus, the unclear future of the ‘FYROM’ and multiple other post-Ottoman conflicts.

In other words, this study has shown, that not even the historical complexities that ultimately produced the ‘Balkanization’ metaphor (i.e. an association of inexplicable chaos, unpredictability and exceptionalism), require a submission to the epistemological and ontological indeterminacy of poststructuralist thought, the realist structuralist-positivist stasis, or the denial of social theory altogether. While ideational structures are important and relevant, they are politically composed outcomes of material social struggles. It is these persistent social changes that produce new eastern, western and other world political questions that lie at the heart of the discipline of International Relations.

## Appendix

### i Maps

**Map 1: Dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire since 1683**



Source: Shepherd (1923: 164)

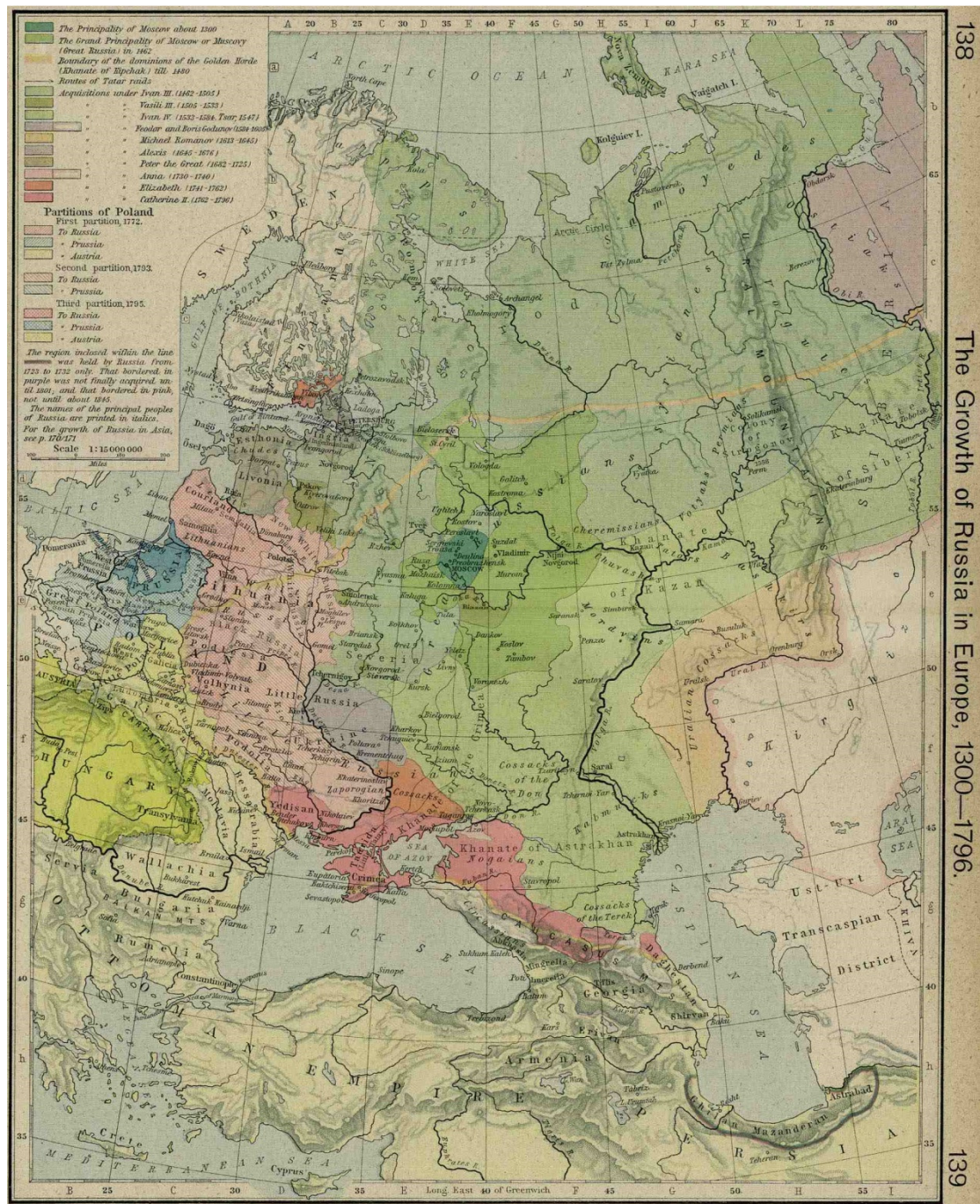
**Map 2: Greek territorial gains 1832-1947**



Source: Cagé (2006 )



Map 3: The Growth of Russia in Europe 1300 – 1796



Source: Shepherd (1923: 164)

## ii Chronology of events

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<b>1451</b>	<b>Mehmet II ‘The Conqueror’</b>
<b>1453</b>	<b>Conquest of Constantinople</b>
<b>1481-1512</b>	<b>Bayezid II</b>
<b>ca. 1520</b>	<b>Selim I defeats the Mamluks in Arabia and Egypt</b> The conquest of the Holy Sites of Mecca and Medina means that Selim I becomes the first of the Ottoman Sultans to assume the highest spiritual office is Sunni Islam, the Caliphate.  The title remains attached to the Ottoman Sultan until Kemal Atatürk renounces the Caliphate in 1924, one year after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. Wahabi separatists in Saudi-Arabia started challenging the legitimacy of the title in the light of the perceived heresies committed by the Young Turks since the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century.
<b>1541</b>	<b>Occupation of Buda by Suleyman the Magnificent</b>
<b>1654</b>	<b>Establishment of the ‘Sublime Porte’</b> The bureaucracy organized under the Grand Vezir’s office is separated from the Sultan’s household
<b>1656</b>	<b>Mehmet IV hands over his executive powers to Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmet Pasha</b>
<b>1683</b>	<b>The second Siege of Vienna fails</b> The Ottoman Empire reaches the peak of its territorial expansion
<b>1687-1691</b>	<b>Suleyman III</b>
<b>1691</b>	<b>Ahmed II</b>
<b>1695</b>	<b>Mustafa II</b>
<b>1699</b>	<b>Treaty of Karlowitz</b> The loss of Hungary; for the first time the Sultan is forced to cede territories
<b>1718</b>	<b>Treaty of Passarowitz</b> Ceding Serbia to Austrian rule
<b>1718–30</b>	<b>Tulip Period</b> Attempt to consolidate Sultanic power within Istanbul through a program of decadent mass consumption for rivalling Istanbul elites
<b>1725– 1789</b>	<b>Abdulhamid I</b>

- 1774**                    **Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca** (also spelled *Kuchuk Kainarji*)  
The Ottoman Empire cedes most of the Black Sea shores to Russia; Russia expands and distorts Article VII of the treaty into a right to protect all Orthodox Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan reacts with a similar claim to protect all Muslims in Russia (specifically the Crimean Tartar Muslims) by re-invoking the title of the Caliph.
- Article XI opens the Straits to Russian commercial vessels
- 1783**                    **Russian occupation of the Crimea**  
In a clear violation of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, Catherine the Great forces the Tartar question in the Crimea which had been left open by the previous treaty negotiations.
- 1787**                    **The Ottoman Empire declares war on Russia over the Crimea**  
Austria later joins the Russian war effort hoping for spoils in the Balkans
- 1789**                    **Selim III**  
Most historical accounts see this as the beginning of modernisation
- 1791**                    **Separate peace with Austria at Sistova**
- 1792**                    **Treaty of Jassy**  
Ending the Russo-Turkish war, another humiliating defeat for the Ottoman Empire cements the Russian annexation of Crimea, whilst Russia withdraws from the Balkans. The Dniestr demarcates the Ottoman/Russian frontier.
- 1793**                    **Introduction of the New Order (*Nizam-i-cedid*)**  
New Model Army and a new treasury for funding the new army corps '*Irâd-i Cedid*' are created. However, it does not survive due to strong resistance from the landed nobility and Janissaries whose surpluses the new fiscal regime had threatened.
- 1797**                    **Rigas Velestinlis' Greek Revolutionary Proclamation**
- 1798**                    **Napoleonic invasion of Egypt**  
This leads to the creation of a modern standing Egyptian army.
- 24 June 1798**        **Execution of Rigas Velestinlis in Belgrade**
- 1804**                    **Outbreak of the first Serb revolt**  
Misrule and overexploitation by Janissary corps lead to a peasant uprising, initially in alliance with the central Ottoman administration.
- 1804**                    **Russian invasion of the Principalities**  
Ottoman-Turkish war over dominance in Romania, Walachia and Bessarabia (lasts until 1817).
- 1805**                    **Edirne Event**  
A coalition of notables from the Balkans marches towards Istanbul threatening to attack the Nizam-I-Cedid troops. Selim III gives in and re-locates the new corps to Anatolia.

<b>1807</b>	<b>Deposition of Selim III</b> Rise of Janissaries and stop of Selim III's centralising reforms; Selim is de-throned as a result of growing pressure from the nobility and still powerful Janissaries; the Nizam-I-Cedid troops are dispersed; followed by a brief interregnum by his cousin Mustafa IV.
<b>1808</b>	<b>Mahmud II</b>  <b>Deed of Alliance (<i>Sened-i Ittifak</i>)</b> Agreement between the ayans and the Grand Vizirate Compromise between central administration and local (military) power base Formal acknowledgment of hereditary land rights
<b>1812</b>	<b>Treaty of Bucharest</b> End of Russo-Turkish War with Bessarabia and parts of the Caucasus ceded to Russia; from this point onwards Russia is willing to let the Serb cause slide in favour of a stable Balkans – in the light of the Napoleonic invasion of Russia; River Proth as new Ottoman/Russian border
<b>Sept 1815</b>	<b>Foundation of the Filik Etaria in Odessa</b>
<b>beginning of 1815</b>	<b>Start of successful challenge of the ayan's power by Mehmed II</b> Followed by the successful establishment of modern, centrally controlled army
<b>1817</b>	<b>Establishment of the tributary fiefdom of Serbia</b> semi-autonomy under Russian guardianship
<b>1820</b>	<b>Ensuing conflict between the Ottoman centre and Ali Pasha of Janina</b>
<b>March 1821</b>	<b>Outbreak of a Revolt in the Principalities by Alexander Ypsilantis</b> Due to the lack of local support this attempt is quickly aborted
<b>April 6 1821</b>	<b>Rising in the Peloponnesus</b> Declaration of the Revolution by Bishop Germanos; This revolt this is less centrally planned and organized if compared to the rising in the Principalities, however much more successful.
<b>Easter Monday 1821</b>	<b>Assassination of the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V</b> The patriarch and other high ranking Orthodox clerics are assassinated in Istanbul by Janissaries in response to the Greek uprising.
<b>11 September 1821</b>	<b>Massacre of Tripolis</b> 30000 Muslim inhabitants killed by Greek insurrection
<b>January 1822</b>	<b>Constitution of Epidaurus proposed by notables and Phanariots</b>
<b>22 February 1822</b>	<b>Ali of Janina (Tepedeleni Ali Pasha) is beheaded by Ottoman forces</b>
<b>March 1822</b>	<b>Chios Massacre</b> 82,000 Greeks were killed, ca. 50000 enslaved and 23,000 expelled in an Ottoman/Egyptian onslaught on the Island



<b>Mid 1823</b>	<b>End of neutrality of European powers</b> Sparked by the reprisals of the Ottoman/Egyptian forces against the Greek civilian population. Lord Canning accepts Greeks as official belligerent party.
<b>1824</b>	<b>First loan to the Greek uprising from the City of London</b> On 14 January 1824, the Greek deputies Andreas Louriotis and Ioannes Orlandos reached London and on 9 February they signed the loan agreement with the bankers Loughman and O'Brien. The amount was 800000 pounds but only 280000 were actually given to Greeks. The total interest was 520000 pounds plus the 8.5% on the nominal value
<b>1826</b>	<b>Annihilation of the Janissaries in Istanbul by Mahmud II</b> The New Order Troops now constitute the core of the Ottoman military.
<b>4 April 1826</b>	<b>Protocol of St Petersburg:</b> Proposal to establish a third Principality by Russia and Britain (and France), Russia was the assigned mediator between the OE and the Greek insurgency: This agreement came about as the result of an Anglo-Russian détente carefully conceived by Lord Canning to establish British hegemony in the region in cooperation with Russia, circumventing the continental contenders.
<b>7 October 1826</b>	<b>Akkerman Convention</b> Establishing the Principalities and Serbia as de-facto Russian protectorates. Regulating the status of the Principalities: Ottoman forces are evicted and the relation to the Porte is relegated to a merely tributary one.
<b>6 July 1827</b>	<b>Treaty of London</b> Plan to establish an autonomous but not entirely independent Greece (By Britain, Russia and France; in the Spirit of St Petersburg).
<b>20 October 1827</b>	<b>Battle of Navarino</b> Destruction of the Ottoman Fleet by the Great Powers during the Greek War of Independence.
<b>February 1828</b>	<b>Capodistrias to become first Greek President</b> The supposed new president Count Capodistrias is released from Russian service and arrives in Greece via Switzerland.
<b>April 1828</b>	<b>Internationalisation of the Greek War of Independence</b> Russia, Britain and France formally declare war on the Ottoman Empire; Russian forces cross into Moldavia; preparing the ground for a further 'liberation' of other Balkan (client) states.
<b>September 1829</b>	<b>Polignac Project</b> The French foreign minister Polignac proposes to Russia to divide the Ottoman Empire between them.
<b>September 1829</b>	<b>Treaty of Adrianople</b> Ending the Russo-Ottoman War: Bessarabia, the Danube Delta and parts of the Caucasus (Georgia) are lost to Russia, wake-up call for the British and French to consider Russian occupation of the Straits a serious option.

<b>Nov 1829 – Feb 1830</b>	<b>London Conference</b> Discussion over the future status of Greece
<b>Feb 1830</b>	<b>London Protocol</b> In the absence of a stable Greek indigenous government the decision was taken to establish a Greek Monarchy headed by a European Prince, but not from the dynasties ruling any of the Great Powers.
<b>12 December 1830</b>	<b>Milos Obremovic declared Prince of Serbia</b> Consolidation of Serbia as a hereditary autonomous principality with Russian guarantees but with a continuing tributary relation to the Ottoman Empire.
<b>October 9, 1831</b>	<b>Assassination of the first Greek president Capodistrias</b> This was caused by clan rivalries and shed doubts on the prospects of a functioning central Greek state.
<b>1831</b>	<b>Mahmud II officially abolishes the timar</b>
<b>18 May 1832</b>	<b>Establishment of a fully independent Kingdom of Greece</b>
<b>21 July 1832</b>	<b>Treaty of Constantinople</b> Fixing of Ottoman/Greek borders and Convention between Britain, Russia, France and Bavaria as guarantor powers: Installation of the Bavarian Prince Otto of Wittelsbach as the King of Greece
<b>21 December 1832</b>	<b>Battle of Konya</b> Mohammed Ali occupies Syria out of dissatisfaction with the lost Greek War where he had been promised major spoils for his participation in the war effort. Mohamad Ali's Son Ibrahim virtually destroyed the main Ottoman Army and set forth a credible threat to take over the Empire altogether.
<b>May 1833</b>	<b>Convention of Kutahya</b> Greater Syria comes under Muhammad Ali's control for his lifetime whilst he retains an inheritable reign over Egypt. (While Syria is handed back promptly under Great Power pressure, only Nasser's coup d'état in 1952 ends the 'Albanian' rule over Egypt).
<b>8 July 1833</b>	<b>Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi</b> Defensive pact between Russia and the OE in the face of Muhammad Ali's threat and after the refusal of France and Britain to help; included a clause whereby (despite the promised mutual assistance) the Porte was exempted from sending military forces; but was obliged to close the Straits to all non-Russian vessels.
<b>1833</b>	<b>Installation of the Translation Bureau (<i>Tercüme Odası</i>)</b> Foreign Relations are increasingly conducted by Muslim, professional salaried officials instead of Greek Dragoman interpreters suspected of sympathies with the Greek revolt. This translation bureau constituted the social foundation of the 'Young' movements

<b>1833</b>	<b>Establishment of the Autocephalous Church of Greece,</b> This includes the renouncing of relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate (an Ottoman institution), which were restored only in 1850.
<b>1835</b>	<b>End of the Regency in Greece</b> Direct monarchical rule by King Otho begins
<b>1838</b>	<b>Anglo-Turkish Trade Convention (<i>Baltalimani Convention</i>)</b> Abolishment of trade monopolies and introduction of low uniform tariffs. Effective implementation of Free Trade policies in the OE.
<b>21 April 1839</b>	<b>Mohammed Ali's son Ibrahim crosses the Euphrates</b> Mohammed Ali launches a second military attempt to seize power in Istanbul.
<b>23 June 1839</b>	<b>Battle of Nezib</b> Ibrahim Ali deals a fatal blow to the Ottoman army leaving an open route to Istanbul
<b>1 July 1839</b>	<b>Abdulmecit I</b>
<b>November 1839</b>	<b>Tanzimat decree (<i>Hatt I Sherif of Gülhane</i>)</b> (also: Gülhane Rescript) Beginning of full-scale modernization
<b>1839</b>	<b>Establishment of distinct Ottoman ministries</b> Most importantly this included Foreign Affairs, Interior and Finance as well as the renaming of the Grand Vizier to 'Prime Minister'.
<b>1840</b>	<b>Introduction of the commercial code</b> Establishment of dedicated trade courts.
<b>1840</b>	<b>Establishment of the Ottoman central Bank</b>
<b>July 1840</b>	<b>Convention for the Pacification of the Levant</b> Muhammad Ali is expelled from Syria after an international coalition saves the Sultan's rule for the second time. Ali remains constrained to Egypt after his repeated attempts to challenge the Sultan. For the first time, the Ottoman Empire participates in an international conference as a party with full rights and duties.
<b>July 1841</b>	<b>Straits Convention</b> Russia, Britain, Prussia, Austria and France agree to close the straits to any warships, save the Sultan's allies. This is mainly a defensive act against Russian ambitions and constitutes a significant step in the development of international maritime law.
<b>3 September 1843</b>	<b>First coup d'état against King Otto</b>
<b>March 1844</b>	<b>First Greek constitution</b>

<b>1847</b>	<b>Start of consolidated land registration in the Ottoman Empire</b> New land deeds recorded in new defterhane (land registry)
<b>March 1854– February 1856</b>	<b>Crimean War</b> As a result of the conflict between Orthodox Russia, Catholic France and the Porte over the guardianship over the Holy Sites in Palestine, Russia blames the Sultan.
<b>1854-57</b>	<b>Blockage of Piraeus by the British Navy</b> Britain aims to contain Greek territorial ambitions.
<b>1856</b>	<b>Islahat Fermani</b> State within the state for the Armenian community.
<b>30 March 1856</b>	<b>Treaty of Paris</b> Ending the Crimean War, the Ottoman Empire formally becomes a legitimate member of the Concert of Europe: Article VIII: admission to “the public law and concert of Europe”
<b>February 1856</b>	<b>Introduction of a citizenship law (<i>Hatt-i Humayun Rescript</i>)</b> Equality of all members of all millets before the law; ‘equality’ of all Ottoman subjects; law of citizenship
<b>1858</b>	<b>Introduction of a liberal Land Code (<i>Arazi Kanunnamesi</i>)</b> The liberalization of transfer of state lands to individuals establishes de-facto private property rights. Corresponds to French concept of public domain (droit foncière de l’état; Türk.: âmme)
<b>October 1862</b>	<b>Revolution against the Othonian regime in Greece</b>
<b>1864</b>	<b>New Greek constitution and enthroning of King George, Prince of Denmark</b> The King from the House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg grants the new prime minister Venizelos considerably more scope of action. The Land Reform permits expropriations on behalf of landless peasants. Venizelos’ power base is a rising bourgeoisie, in opposition to established landholders.
<b>1869</b>	<b>Ottoman Law of Nationality</b>
<b>1861</b>	<b>Abdülaziz</b> Continuity of Modernisation; however Abdülaziz puts more emphasis on the title of Caliph.
<b>1871</b>	<b>Distribution of National Lands in Modern Greece</b>
<b>1873</b>	<b>World Economic Crisis</b> Turmoil in the financial markets affect both the young Greek state as well as the Ottoman Empire. Austrian banks operating within the Ottoman Empire collapse; European capital starts retreating. The already highly indebted Ottoman finances suffer a loss of capital.

<b>1874</b>	<b>Crop failure followed by great famine</b>
<b>1875</b>	<b>Bosnian uprising</b> strategic dimension with Austria Hungary at its doorstep
<b>October 1875</b>	<b>Ottoman State Bankruptcy</b> declaration of suspension of payments
<b>1876</b>	<b>Establishment of the Dette Ottomane</b> Tax collection under Franco-British authority
<b>1876-7</b>	<b>Ottoman Constitutional Experiment</b> The Young Ottoman reform effort culminates in the short-lived introduction of an Ottoman constitution and parliament
<b>1876</b>	<b>Bulgarian ‘April’ uprising</b>
<b>1876</b>	<b>Abdülhamid II</b> The reactionary ‘Neo-Absolutist’ restoration on the basis of ‘Islamic values’ puts an end of the constitutional experiment.
<b>1877</b>	<b>Russo-Turkish War</b> The Russian attempt to recover territories lost during the Crimean War is coordinated with the declaration of principalities of Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, which had already enjoyed semi-independence under Russian guardianship.
<b>1878</b>	<b>Treaty of San Stefano</b> Establishment of a Greater Bulgaria; creation of a foothold for Russia in Europe.
<b>1878</b>	<b>Treaty of Berlin</b> Dismantling of Russian ambitions in the Balkans by creating a smaller, fully independent Bulgaria at Ottoman territorial expense. (Alexander Joseph of Battenberg as first ‘Prince of Bulgaria’)
<b>22 May 1878</b>	<b>Romanian independence under King Carlo I</b> (Karl I of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen)
<b>1880</b>	<b>Abolition of the Tithe in Greece</b>
<b>1908</b>	<b>Young Turk Revolution (also: ‘Rose Revolution’ )</b> Empowerment of the ‘Committee of Union and Progress’ Second constitutional attempt
<b>1912-15</b>	<b>Armenian genocide</b>
<b>29 May 1912</b>	<b>Outbreak of the Balkan Wars</b> Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, with Russian support, declare war on the Ottoman Empire. The coalition splits, however, over the Macedonian question

**May 1913**

**Treaty of London**

Establishment of the territorial inter-state order in the Balkans that is to last until the outbreak of the First World War.

### iii Glossary

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<i>âyân</i>	Local notables (communal leaders); tax-collectors by government appointment; replaced the timariot
<i>Bey</i>	provincial administrator (lord)
<i>beytu mali-lmuslimin</i>	the treasury of the Muslims: describing the work ethic of the early Ottoman bureaucracy
<i>çiftlik</i>	Large landholdings (tax farms) 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> centuries in the Balkans and Anatolia (quasi-hereditary)
<i>dar-al-ahrâ</i>	House of War
<i>dar-al-islam</i>	House of Islam
<i>dawla</i>	Realm of non-believers (modern Arabic: state)
<i>defterhane</i>	Land registry (Tanzimat period)
<i>derebeys</i>	Old notables; lords of the valley
<i>devşirme</i>	Child levy Exercised in the Christian areas of the Balkans, this tax was the main source of recruitment for slave soldiers and bureaucrats until the 18th century
<i>eşraf</i>	Form of Local Notables ( <i>ayanlık</i> ): recognition by communities by social stratification; bureaucratic-military elements associated with the government; not necessarily the same as the 17 <sup>th</sup> century rising ayan
<i>evkaf</i>	Directorate of <i>vakfs</i>
<i>iltizam</i> (Egypt)	New government tax farms Here, the tax is arbitrarily fixed by the government which enables short-term increases in surplus-extraction possible
<i>istiglal</i>	Land right (right to usufruct)
<i>kanun</i>	Sultan's law
<i>malikane</i>	Life time lease on land
<i>meşvere</i>	Consultation

<i>millet; (pl.: millet)</i>	Community of people (modern translation in Turkish and Arabic: ‘nation’) This could apply to any group or formation, not only communities of faith or language. The four biggest millets reflected religious communities: Muslims, Byzantine/Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox and Jews
<i>millet-i hâkime</i>	Ruling class (millet)
<i>millet-i- islamiye</i>	Umma (see below)
<i>millet-i mahkûme</i>	Ruled class (non-Muslim communities; most commonly used meaning)
<i>mülk</i>	Private land, <i>mulk</i> : right of full ownership and alienation, as well as right to the usufruct of the land.
<i>miri</i>	State-owned land, individually rentable right to usufruct
<i>nizam-I-Cedid</i>	New Order, launched by Selim III
<i>nizam-I-Cedid Ordusu</i>	Ottoman New Model Army
<i>örf-I sultani</i>	Sultanic verdicts; sovereign prerogatives
<i>rakabe</i>	Land title
<i>reaya (hereditary status)</i> (also: <i>raiyyet</i> )	Peasantry
<i>sancak</i>	Administrative region
<i>sened-i htıfak</i>	Deed of Alliance
<i>serasker</i>	Commander in Chief, Minister of War, and garrison commander and police chief in the capital.
<i>şeriat</i>	The good, pious (Islamic) order
<i>siphai</i>	Landlord/knight Tax farm (timar) holder
<i>Şura</i>	Council
<i>tanizmat</i>	reorganization, referring to the large-scale reform of Ottoman in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century (1828) under Abdulmecit I
<i>terciime odasi</i>	Translation office



<i>timar</i>	traditional Ottoman fief in return for military service as siphai (tax fixed on the basis of actual revenue)
<i>üsiir</i>	Tithe
<i>ulema</i>	Clergy
<i>umma (arab), ümmet (turkish)</i>	Community of believers
<i>vakf</i>	state owned, religiously legitimated land for communal use
<i>vali</i>	Local governor
<i>vilayet</i>	Province

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